THE
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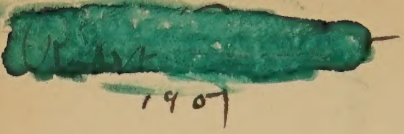
SICKLE



THE GOLD SICKLE

: : OR : :

Hena, The Virgin of The Isle of Sen

A Tale of Druid Gaul

—By EUGENE SUE—

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH BY
DANIEL DE LEON
NEW YORK LABOR NEWS COMPANY, 1904

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The Gold Sickle; or, Hena the Virgin of the Isle of Sen, is the initial story of the series that Eugene Sue wrote under the collective title of *The Mysteries of the People; or, History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages.*

The scheme of this great work of Sue's was stupendously ambitious—and the author did not fall below the ideal that he pursued. His was the purpose of producing a comprehensive "universal history," dating from the beginning of the present era down to his own days. But the history that he proposed to sketch was not to be a work for closet study. It was to be a companion in the stream of actual, every-day life and struggle, with an eye especially to the successive struggles of the successively ruled with the successively ruling classes. In the execution of his design, Sue conceived a plan that was as brilliant as it was poetic—withal profoundly philosophic. One family, the descendants of a Gallic chief named Joel, typifies the oppressed; one family, the descendants of a Frankish chief and conqueror named Neroweg, typifies the oppressor; and across and adown the ages, the successive struggles between oppressors and oppressed—the history of civilization—is thus represented in a majestic allegory. In the execution of this superb plan a thread was necessary to connect the several epochs with one another, to preserve the continuity requisite for historic accuracy, and, above all, to give unity and point to the silent lesson taught by the unfolding drama. Sue solved the problem by an ingenious scheme—a series of stories, supposedly written from age to age, sometimes at shorter, other times at longer intervals, by the descendants of the ancestral type of the oppressed, narrating their special experience and hand-

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ing the supplemented chronicle down to their successors from generation to generation, always accompanied with some emblematic relic, that constitutes the first name of each story. The series, accordingly, though a work presented in the garb of "fiction," is the best universal history extant: Better than any work, avowedly on history, it graphically traces the special features of class-rule as they have succeeded one another from epoch to epoch, together with the special character of the struggle between the contending classes. The "Law," "Order," "Patriotism," "Religion," "Family," etc., etc., that each successive tyrant class, despite its change of form, fraudulently sought refuge in to justify its criminal existence whenever threatened; the varying economic causes of the oppression of the toilers; the mistakes incurred by these in their struggles for redress; the varying fortunes of the conflict;—all these social dramas are therein reproduced in a majestic series of "novels" covering leading and successive episodes in the history of the race—an inestimable gift, above all to our own generation, above all to the American working class, the short history of whose country deprives it of historic back-ground.

It is not until the fifth story is reached—the period of the Frankish conquest of Gaul, 486 of the present era—that the two distinct streams of the typical oppressed and typical oppressor meet. But the four preceding ones are necessary, and preparatory for the main drama, that starts with the fifth story and that, although carried down to the revolution of 1848 which overthrew Louis Philippe in France, reaches its grand climax in *The Sword of Honor; or, The Foundation of the French Republic,* that is, the French Revolution. These stories are nineteen in number, and their chronological order is the following:

1. The Gold Sickle; or, Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sen;
2. The Brass Bell; or, The Chariot of Death;
3. The Iron Collar; or, Faustine and Syomara;
4. The Silver Cross; or, The Carpenter of Nazareth;

5. The Casque's Lark; or, Victoria, The Mother of the Fields;
6. The Poniard's Hilt; or, Karadeucq and Ronan;
7. The Branding Needle; or, The Monastery of Charolles;
8. The Abbatial Crosier; or, Bonaik and Septimine;
9. Carlovingian Coins; or, The Daughters of Charlemagne;
10. The Iron Arrow-Head; or, The Maid of the Buckler;
11. The Infant's Skull; or, The End of the World;
12. The Pilgrim's Shell; or, Fergan the Quarryman;
13. The Iron Pincers; or, Mylio and Karvel;
14. The Iron Trevet; or, Jocelyn the Champion;
15. The Executioner's Knife; or, Joan of Arc;
16. The Pocket Bible; or, Christian the Printer;
17. The Blacksmith's Hammer; or, The Peasant-Code;
18. The Sword of Honor; or, The Foundation of the French Republic;
19. The Galley-Slave's Ring; or, The Family of Lebrenn.

Long and effectually has the influence of the usurping class in the English-speaking world succeeded in keeping this brilliant torch that Eugene Sue lighted, from casting its rays across the path of the English-speaking peoples. Several English translations were attempted before this, in England and this country, some fifty years ago. They were all fractional: they are all out of print now: most of them are not to be found even in public libraries of either England or America, not a wrack being left to them, little more than a faint tradition. Only two of the translations are not wholly obliterated. One of them was published by Trübner & Co. jointly with David Nutt, both of London, in 1863; the other was published by Clark, 448 Broome street, New York, in 1867. The former was anonymous, the translator's identity being indicated only with the initials "K. R. H. M." It contains only eight of the nineteen stories of the original, and even these are avowedly abridgments. The latter was translated by Mary L. Booth, and it broke off before well under way—extinguished as if snuffed off by a gale. Even these

two luckier fragmentary translations, now surviving only as curios in a few libraries, attest the vehemence and concertedness of the effort to suppress this great gift of Sue's intellect to the human race. It will be thus no longer. *The Mysteries of the People; or, History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages* will henceforth enlighten the English-speaking toiling masses as well.

DANIEL DE LEON.

New York, May 1, 1904.

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CHAPTER I.

THE GUEST.

He who writes this account is called Joel, the brenn* of the tribe of Karnak; he is the son of Marik, who was the son of Kirio, the son of Tiras, the son of Gomer, the son of Vorr, the son of Glenan, the son of Erer, the son of Roderik chosen chief of the Gallic army that, now two hundred and seventy-seven years ago, levied tribute upon Rome.

Joel (why should I not say so?) feared the gods, he was of a right heart, a steady courage and a cheerful mind. He loved to laugh, to tell stories, and above all to hear them told, like the genuine Gaul that he was.

At the time when Caesar invaded Gaul (may his name be accursed!), Joel lived two leagues from Alrè, not far from the sea and the isle of Roswallan, near the edge of the forest of Karnak, the most celebrated forest of Breton Gaul.

One evening towards nightfall—the evening before the anniversary of the day when Hena, his daughter, his well-beloved daughter was born unto him—it is now eighteen years ago—Joel and his eldest son Guilhern were returning home in a chariot drawn by four of those fine little Breton oxen whose horns are smaller than their ears. Joel and his son had been laying marl on their lands, as is usually done in the autumn, so that the lands may be in good condition for seed-time in the spring. The chariot was slowly climbing up the hill of Craig'h at a place where that mountainous road is narrowed between two rocks, and from where the sea is seen at a distance, and still farther away the Isle of Sen—the mysterious and sacred isle.

*Gallic word for chief.

"Father," Guilhern said to Joel, "look down there below on the flank of the hill. There is a rider coming this way. Despite the steepness of the descent, he has put his horse to a gallop."

"As sure as the good Elldud invented the plow, that man will break his neck."

"Where can he be riding to in such a hurry? The sun is going down; the wind blows high and threatens a storm; and that road that leads to the desert strand—"

"Son, that man is not of Breton Gaul. He wears a furred cap and a shaggy coat, and his tanned-skin hose are fastened with red bands."

"A short axe hangs at his right and he has a long knife in a sheath at his left."

"His large black horse does not seem to stumble in the descent . . . Where can he be going in such a hurry?"

"Father, the man must have lost his way."

"Oh, my son, may Teutates hear you! We shall tender our hospitality to the rider. His dress tells he is a stranger. What beautiful stories will he not be able to tell us of his country and his travels!"

"May the divine Ogmi whose words bind men in golden chains, be propitious to us, father! It is long since any strange story-teller has sat at our hearth."

"Besides, we have had no news of what is going on elsewhere in Gaul."

"Unfortunately so!"

"Oh, my son, if I were all-powerful as Hesus, I would have a new story-teller every evening at supper."

"I would send men traveling everywhere, and have them return and tell their adventures."

"And if I had the power of Hesus, what wonderful adventures would I not provide for my travelers so as to increase the interest in their stories on their return."

"Father, the rider is coming close to us!"

"Yes, he reins in because the road is here narrow, and we bar his passage with our chariot. Come, Guilhern, the moment is favorable; the passenger must have lost his way; let us offer him hospitality for to-night. We shall then keep him to-morrow, and perhaps several other days. We shall have done him a good turn, and he will give us the news from Gaul and of the other countries that he has visited."

"Besides, it will be a great joy to my sister Hena who is to come home to-morrow for the feast of her birthday."

"Oh, Guilhern, I never thought of the pleasure that my beloved daughter will have listening to the stranger! He must be our guest!"

"That he shall be, father! Indeed, he shall!" answered Guilhern resolutely.

Joel and his son alighted from the chariot, and advanced towards the rider. Once close to him, both were struck with the majesty of the stranger's looks. Nothing haughtier than his eyes, more masculine than his face, more worthy than his bearing. On his forehead and on one cheek were visible the traces of two wounds only freshly healed. To judge by his dauntless appearance, the rider must have been one of those chiefs whom the tribes elect from time to time to lead them in battle. Joel and his son were all the more anxious to have him accept their hospitality.

"Friend traveler," said Joel, "night is upon us; you have lost your way; the road you are on leads nowhere but to the desert strands; the tide will soon be washing over them because the wind is blowing high. To keep on your route by night would be dangerous. Come to my house. You may resume your journey to-morrow."

"I have not lost my way; I know where I am going to; and I am in a hurry. Turn your oxen aside; make room for me to pass," was the brusque answer of the rider, whose forehead was wet with perspiration from the hurry of his course. By his accent he seemed to be from central Gaul, towards the

Loire. After having thus addressed Joel, he struck his large black horse with both heels in the flanks and tried to draw still nearer to the oxen that now completely barred his passage.

"Friend traveler, did you not hear me?" rejoined Joel. "I told you that this road led only to the seashore, that night was on, and that I offer you my house."

The stranger, however, beginning to wax angry, replied: "I do not need your hospitality . . . Draw your oxen aside . . . Do you not see that the rocks leave me no passage either way? . . . Hurry up; I am in haste—"

"Friend," said Joel, you are a stranger; I am of this country; it is my duty to prevent you from going astray . . . I shall do my duty—"

"By Ritha-Gaür, who made himself a blouse out of the beard of the kings he shaved!" cried the stranger, now in towering rage. "I have traveled a deal since my beard began to grow, have seen many countries, many peoples and many strange customs, but never yet have I come across two fools like these!"

Learning from the mouth of the stranger himself that he had seen many countries, many peoples and many strange customs, Joel and his son, both of whom were passionately fond of hearing stories, concluded that many and charming must be the ones the stranger could tell, and they felt all the more desirous of securing such a guest. Accordingly, so far from turning the chariot aside, Joel advanced close to the rider, and said to him with the sweetest voice that he could master, his natural voice being rather rough:

"Friend, you shall go no further! I wish to be respectful to the gods, above all to Teutates, the god of travelers, and shall therefore keep you from going astray by making you spend a good night under a good roof, instead of allowing you to wander about the strand, where you would run the risk of being drowned in the rising tide."

"Take care!" replied the unknown rider carrying his hand to the axe that hung from his belt. "Take care! . . . If

you do not forthwith turn your oxen aside, I shall make a sacrifice to the gods, and shall join you to the offering!"

"The gods cannot choose but protect such a worshipper as yourself," answered Joel, who, smiling, had passed a few words in a low voice to his son. "The gods will prevent you from spending the night on the strand . . . You'll see—"

Father and son precipitated themselves unexpectedly upon the traveler. Each took him by a leg, and both being large and robust men, raised him erect over his saddle, giving at the same time a thump with their knees to his horse's belly. The animal ran ahead, and Joel and Guilhern respectfully lowered the rider on his feet to the ground. Now in a wild rage, the traveler tried to resist, but before he could draw his knife he was held fast by Joel and Guilhern, one of whom produced a strong rope with which they firmly tied the stranger's feet and hands—all of which was done with great mildness and affability on the part of the story-greedy father and son, who despite the furious wrestling of the stranger, deposited him on the chariot with increasing respect and politeness, seeing they were increasingly struck by the virile dignity of his face.

Guilhern then mounted the traveler's horse and followed the chariot that Joel led, urging on the oxen with his goad. They were in earnest haste to reach the shelter of their house: the gale increased; the roar of the waves was heard dashing upon the rocks along the coast; streaks of lightning glistened through the darkening clouds; all the signs portended a stormy night.

All these threatening signs notwithstanding, the unknown rider seemed nowise thankful for the hospitality that Joel and his son had pressed upon him. Extended on the bottom of the chariot he was pale with rage. He ground his teeth and puffed at his mouth. But keeping his anger to himself he said not a word. Joel (it must be admitted) passionately loved a story, but he also passionately loved to talk. He turned to the stranger:

"My guest, for such you are now, I give thanks to Teutates,

the god of travelers, for having sent me a guest. You should know who I am. Yes, I must tell you who I am, seeing you are to sit down at my hearth"; and unaffected by the stranger's gesture of anger, which seemed to say he cared not to know who Joel was, the latter proceeded:

"My name is Joel . . . I am the son of Marik, who was the son of Kirio . . . Kirio was the son of Tiras . . . Tiras was the son of Gomer . . . Gomer was the son of Vorr . . . Vorr was the son of Glenan . . . Glenan, son of Erer, who was the son of Roderik, chosen brenn of the confederated Gallic army, who two hundred and seventy-six years ago levied tribute upon Rome in order to punish the Romans for their treachery. I have been chosen brenn of my tribe, which is the tribe of Karnak. From father to son we have been peasants; we cultivate our fields as best we can, following the example left by Coll to our ancestors . . . We sow more wheat and barley than rye and oats."

The stranger continued nursing his rage rather than paying any attention to these details. Joel continued imperturbably:

"Thirty-two years ago, I married Margarid, the daughter of Dorlern. I have from her three sons and a daughter. The elder boy is there behind us, leading your good black horse, friend guest . . . his name is Guilhern. He and several other relatives help me in the cultivation of our field. I raise a good many black sheep that pasture on our meadows, as well as half-wild hogs, as vicious as wolves and who never sleep under a roof . . . We have some fine meadows in this valley of Alrè . . . I also raise horses, colts of my spirited stallion Tom-Bras.* My son amuses himself raising war and hunting dogs. The hunting dogs are of the breed of a greyhound named Tyntammar; the ones destined for war are the whelps of a large mastiff named Deber-Trud.** Our horses

* Ardent.

** Man-eater.

and our dogs are so renowned that people come more than twenty leagues from here to buy them. So you see, my guest, that you might have fallen into a worse house."

The stranger emitted a sigh of suppressed rage, bit what he could reach of his long blonde mustache and raised his eyes to heaven.

Joel proceeded while pricking his oxen:

"Mikael, my second son, is an armorer at Alrè, four leagues from here . . . He does not fashion war implements only, but also plow-coulters and long Gallic scythes and axes that are highly prized, because he draws his iron from the mountains of Arres . . . But there is more, friend traveler . . . yes, there is more . . . Mikael does other things besides. Before establishing himself at Alrè, he was at Bourges and worked with one of our parents who is a descendant of the first artisan who ever conceived the idea of alloying iron and copper with block-tin, a composition in which the artisans of Bourges excel . . . Thus my son Mikael came away a worthy pupil of his masters. Oh, if you only saw the things he turns out! You would think the horse's bits, the chariot ornaments, the superb casques of war that Mikael manufactures to be of silver! He has just finished a casque the point of which represents an elk's head with its horns . . . There is nothing more magnificent!"

"O!" murmured the stranger between his teeth, "how true is the saying: 'The Sword of a Gaul kills but once, his tongue massacres you without end!'"

"Friend guest, so far I can bestow no praise upon your tongue, which is as silent as a fish's. But I shall await your leisure, when it will be your turn to tell me who you are, whence you come, where you are going to, what you have seen in your travels, what wonderful people you have met, and the latest news from the sections of Gaul that you have traversed. While waiting for your narratives, I shall finish informing you about myself and family."

At this threat the stranger contorted his members in an effort to snap his bonds; he failed; the rope was staunch, and Joel as well as his son made perfect knots.

"I have not yet spoken to you of my third son Albinik the sailor," continued Joel. "He traffics with the island of Great Britanny, as well as all the ports of Gaul, and he goes as far as Spain carrying Gascony wines and salted provisions from Aquitaine . . . Unfortunately he has been at sea a long time with his lovely wife Meroë; so you will not see them this evening at my house. I told you that besides three sons I had a daughter . . . as to her! Oh, as to her! . . . See here," added Joel with an air that was at once boastful and tender, "she is the pearl of the family . . . It is not I only who say so, my wife also, my sons, my whole tribe says the same thing. There is but one voice to sing the praises of Hena, the daughter of Joel . . . of Hena, one of the virgins of the Isle of Sen."

"What!" cried the traveler sitting up with a start, the only motion allowed to him by his bonds, that held his feet tied and his arms pinioned behind him. "What? Your daughter? Is she one of the virgins of the Isle of Sen?"

"That seems to astonish and somewhat mollify you, friend guest!"

"Your daughter?" the stranger proceeded, as if unable to believe what he heard. "Your daughter? . . . Is she one of the nine druid priestesses of the Isle of Sen?"

"As true as that to-morrow it will be eighteen years since she was born! We have been preparing to celebrate her birthday, and you may attend the feast. The guest seated at our hearth is of our family . . . You will see my daughter. She is the most beautiful, the sweetest, the wisest of her companions, without thereby detracting from any of them."

"Very well, then," brusquely replied the unknown, "I shall pardon you the violence you committed upon me."

"Hospitable violence, friend."

"Hospitable, or not, you prevented me by force from proceeding to the wharf of Erer, where a boat awaited me until sunset, to take me to the Isle of Sen."

At these words Joel broke out laughing.

"What are you laughing about?" asked the stranger.

"If you were to tell me that a boat with the head of a dog, the wings of a bird and the tail of a fish was waiting for you to take you to the sun, I would laugh as loud, and for the same reason. You are my guest; I shall not insult you by telling you that you lie. But I will tell you, friend, you are joking when you talk of a boat that is to take you to the Isle of Sen. No man, excepting the very oldest druids, have ever or ever will set foot on the Isle of Sen."

"And when you go there to see your daughter?"

"I do not step on the isle. I stop at the little island of Kellor. There I wait for my daughter, and she goes there to meet me."

"Friend Joel," said the traveler, "you have so willed it that I be your guest; I am that, and, as such, I ask a service of you. Take me to-morrow in your boat to the little island of Kellor."

"Do you know that the ewaghs watch day and night?"

"I know it. It was one of them who was to come for me this evening at the wharf of Erer to conduct me to Talyessin the oldest of the druids, who, at this hour, is at the Isle of Sen with his wife Auria."

"That is true!" exclaimed Joel much surprised. "The last time my daughter came home she said that Talyessin was on the isle since the new year, and that the wife of Talyessin tendered her a mother's care."

"You see, you may believe me, friend Joel. Take me tomorrow to the island of Kellor; I shall see one of the ewaghs."

"I consent. I shall take you to the island of Kellor."

"And now you may loosen my bonds. I swear by Hesus that I shall not seek to elude your hospitality."

"Very well," responded Joel, loosening the stranger's bonds; "I trust my guest's promise."

While this conversation proceeded it had grown pitch dark. But the darkness notwithstanding and the difficulties of the road, the chariot, conducted by the sure hand of Joel, rolled up before his house. His son, Guilhern, who, mounted on the stranger's horse, had followed the van, took an ox-horn that was opened at both ends, and using it for a trumpet blew three times. The signal was speedily answered by a great barking of dogs.

"Here we are at home!" said Joel to the stranger. "Be not alarmed at the barking of the dogs. Listen! That loud voice that dominates all the others is Deber-Trud's, from whom descends the valiant breed of war dogs that you will see to-morrow. My son Guilhern will take your horse to the stable. The animal will find a good shelter and plenty of provender."

At the sound of Guilhern's trump, one of the family came out of the house holding a resin torch. Guided by the light, Joel led his oxen and the chariot entered the yard.

CHAPTER II.

A GALLIC HOMESTEAD.

Like all other rural homes, Joel's was spacious and round of shape. The walls consisted of two rows of hurdles, the space between which was filled with a mixture of beaten clay and straw; the inside and outside of the thick wall was plastered over with a layer of fine and fattish earth, which, when dry, was hard as sandstone. The roofing was large and projecting. It consisted of oaken joists joined together and covered with a layer of seaweed laid so thick that it was proof against water.

On either side of the house stood the barns destined for the storage of the harvest, and also for the stables, the sheepfolds, the kennels, the storerooms and the washrooms.

These several structures formed an oblong square that surrounded a large yard, closed up at night with a massive gate. On the outside, a strong palisade, raised on the brow of a deep ditch, enclosed the system of buildings, leaving between it and them an alley about four feet wide. Two large and ferocious war mastiffs were let loose during the night in the vacant space. The palisade had an exterior door that corresponded with an interior one. All were locked at night.

The number of men, women and children—all more or less near relatives of Joel—who cultivated fields in common with him, was considerable. These lodged in the houses attached to the principal building, where they met at noon and in the evening to take their joint meals.

Other homesteads, similarly constructed and occupied by numerous families who cultivated lands in common, lay scat-

tered here and there over the landscape and composed the *ligniez,* or tribe of Karnak, of which Joel was chosen chief.

Upon his entrance in the yard of his homestead, Joel was received with the caresses of his old war dog Deber-Trud, an animal of an iron grey color streaked with black, an enormous head, blood-shot eyes, and of such a high stature that in standing up to caress his master he placed his front paws upon Joel's shoulders. He was a dog of such boldness that he once fought a monstrous bear of the mountains of Arres, and killed him. As to his war qualities, Deber-Trud would have been worthy of figuring with the war pack of Bithert, the Gallic chieftain who at sight of a small hostile troop said disdainfully: "They are not enough for a meal for my dogs."

As Deber-Trud looked over and smelled the traveler with a doubtful air, Joel said to the animal: "Do you not see he is a guest whom I bring home?"

As if he understood the words, Deber-Trud ceased showing any uneasiness about the stranger, and gamboled clumsily ahead of his master into the house. The house was partitioned into three sections of unequal size. The two smaller ones, separated from each other and from the main hall by oaken panels, were destined, one for Joel and his wife, the other for Hena, their daughter, when she came to visit the family. The vast hall between the two served as a dining-room, and in it were performed the noon and evening in-door labors.

When the stranger entered the hall, a large fire of beech wood, enlivened with dry brush wood and seaweed burned in the hearth, and with its brilliancy rendered superfluous the light of a handsome lamp of burnished copper that hung from three chains of the same metal. The lamp was a present from Mikael the armorer.

Two whole sheep, impaled in long iron spits broiled before the hearth, while salmon and other sea fish boiled in a large pewter pot filled with water, seasoned with vinegar, salt and caraway.

The panels were ornamented with heads of wolves, boars, cerfs and of two wild bulls called *urok,* an animal that began to be rare in the region; beside them hung hunting weapons, such as bows, arrows and slings, and weapons of war, such as the *sparr* and the *matag,* axes, sabres of copper, bucklers of wood covered with the tough skin of seals, and long lances with iron heads, sharpened and barbed and provided with little brass bells, intended to notify the enemy from afar that the Gallic warrior approached, seeing that the latter disdains ambuscades, and loves to fight in the open. There were also fishing nets and harpoons to harpoon the salmon in the shallows when the tide goes out.

To the right of the main door stood a kind of altar, consisting of a block of granite, surmounted and covered by large oak branches freshly cut. A little copper bowl lay on the stone in which seven twigs of mistletoe stood. From above, on the wall, the following inscription looked down:

Abundance and Heaven
Are for the Just and the Pure.
He is Pure and Holy
Who Performs Celestial Works and Pure.

When Joel stepped into the house, he approached the copper basin in which stood the seven branches of mistletoe and reverently put his lips to each. His guest followed his example, and then both walked towards the hearth.

At the hearth was Mamm' Margarid, Joel's wife, with a distaff. She was tall of stature, and wore a short, sleeveless tunic of brown wool over a long robe of grey with narrow sleeves, both tunic and robe being fastened around her waist with her apron string. A white cap, cut square, left exposed her grey hair, that parted over her forehead. Like many other women of her kin, she wore a coral necklace round her neck, bracelets inwrought with garnets and other trinkets of gold and silver fashioned at Autun.

Around Mamm' Margarid played the children of Guilhern and several other of her kin, while their young mothers busied themselves preparing supper.

"Margarid," said Joel to his wife, "I bring a guest to you."

"He is welcome," answered the woman without stopping to spin. "The gods send us a guest, our hearth is his own. The eve of my daughter's birth is propitious."

"May your children when they travel, be received as I am by you," answered the stranger respectfully.

"But you do not yet know what kind of a guest the gods have sent us, Margarid," rejoined Joel; "such a guest as one would request of Ogmi for the long autumn and winter nights; a guest who in the course of his travels has seen so many curious things and wonderful that a hundred evenings would not be too many to listen to his marvelous stories."

Hardly had Joel pronounced these words when, from Mamm' Margarid and the young mothers down to the little boys and girls, all looked at the stranger with the greed of curiosity, expectant of the marvelous stories he was to tell.

"Are we to have supper soon, Margarid?" asked Joel. "Our guest is probably as hungry as myself; I am hungry as a wolf."

"The folk have just gone out to fill the racks of the cattle," answered Margarid; "they will be back shortly. If our guest is willing we shall be pleased of his company at supper."

"I thank the wife of Joel, and shall wait," said the unknown.

"And while waiting," remarked Joel, "you can tell us a story—"

But the traveler interrupted his host and said smiling:

"Friend, as one cup serves for all, so does the same story serve for all . . . The cup will shortly circulate from lip to lip, and the story from ear to ear . . . But now tell me, what is that brass belt for that I see hanging yonder?"

"Have you not also in your country the belt of agility?"

"Explain yourself, Joel."

"Here, with us, at every new moon, the lads of each tribe come to the chief and try on the belt, in order to prove that their girth has not broadened with self-indulgence, and that they have preserved themselves agile and nimble. Those who cannot hitch the belt around themselves, are hissed, are pointed at with derision, and must pay a fine. Accordingly, all see to their stomachs lest they come to look like a leathern bottle on two skittles."

"A good custom. I regret it fell into disuse in my province. And what is the purpose of that big old trunk? It is of precious wood and seems to have seen many years."

"Very many. That is the family trunk of triumph," answered Joel opening the trunk, in which the stranger saw many whitened skulls. One of them, sawn in two, was mounted on a brass foot like a cup.

"These are, no doubt, the heads of enemies who have been killed by your fathers, friend Joel? With us this sort of family charnel houses has long been abandoned."

"With us also. I preserve these heads only out of respect for my ancestors. Since more than two hundred years, the prisoners of war are no longer mutilated. The habit existed in the days of the kings whom Ritha-Gaür shaved of their hair, as you mentioned before, to make himself a blouse out of their beards. Those were gay days of barbarism, were those days of royalty. I heard my grandfather Kirio say that even as late as in the days of his father, Tiras, the men who went to war returned to their tribes carrying the heads of their enemies stuck to the points of their lances, or trailed by the hair from the breast-plates of their horses. They were then nailed to the doors of the houses for trophies, just as you see yonder on the wall the heads of wild animals."

"With us, in olden days, friend Joel, these trophies were also preserved, but preserved in cedar oil when they were the heads of a hostile chieftain."

"By Hesus! Cedar oil! . . . What magnificence!" exclaimed Joel smiling. "That is the way our wives reason: for good fish, good sauce.'"

"These relics were with us, as with you, the book from which the young Gaul learned of the exploits of his fathers. Often did the families of the vanquished offer to ransom these spoils; but to relinquish for money a head conquered by oneself or an ancestor was looked upon as an unpardonable crime of avarice and impiousness. I say with you, those barbarous customs passed away with royalty, and with them the days when our ancestors painted their bodies blue and scarlet, and dyed their hair and beard with lime water to impart to them a copper-red hue."

"Without wronging their memory, friend guest, our ancestors must have been unpleasant beings to look upon, and must have resembled the frightful red and blue dragons that ornament the prows of the vessels of those savage pirates of the North that my son Albinik the sailor and his lovely wife Meroë have told us some curious tales about. But here are our men back from the stables; we shall not have to wait much longer for supper. I see Margarid unspitting the lambs. You shall taste them, friend, and see what a fine taste the salt meadows on which they browse impart to their flesh."

All the men of the family of Joel who entered the hall wore, like him, a sleeveless blouse of coarse wool, through which the sleeves of their jackets or white shirts were passed. Their breeches reached down to their ankles; and they were shod with low slippers. Several of these laborers, just in from the fields, wore over their shoulders a cloak of sheep-skin, which they immediately took off. All wore woolen caps, long hair cut round, and bushy beards. The last two to enter held each other by the arm; they were especially handsome and robust.

"Friend Joel," inquired the stranger, "who are those two

young fellows? The statues of the heathen god Mars are not better shaped, nor have so valiant an aspect."

"They are two relatives of mine; two cousins, Julyan and Armel. They love each other like brothers . . . Quite recently an enraged bull rushed at Armel and Julyan saved Armel at the peril of his own life. Thanks to Hesus we are not now in times of war. But should it be necessary to take up arms, Julyan and Armel have taken 'the pledge of brotherhood' . . . But supper is ready . . . Come, yours is the seat of honor."

Joel and the unknown guest drew near the table. It was round and raised somewhat above the floor which was covered with fresh straw. All around the table were seats bolstered with fragrant grass. The two broiled muttons, now quartered, were served up in large platters of beechwood, white as ivory. There were also large pieces of salted pork and a smoked ham of wild boar. The fish remained in the large pot that they had been boiled in.

At the place where Joel, the head of the family, took his seat, stood a huge cup of plated copper that even two men could not have drained. It was before that cup, which marked the place of honor, that the stranger was placed with Joel at his left and Mamm' Margarid at his right.

The old men, the young girls and the children then ranked themselves around the table. The grown up and the young men sat down behind these in a second row, from which they rose from time to time to perform some service, or, every time that, passing from hand to hand, beginning with the stranger, the large cup was empty, to fill it from a barrel of hydromel, that was placed at a corner of the hall. Furnished with a piece of barley or wheat bread, everyone received or took a slice of broiled or salted meat, which he cut up with his knife, or into which he bit freely without the help of knife.

The old war-dog Deber-Trud, enjoying the privileges of his

age and long years of service, lay at the feet of Joel, who did not forget his faithful servitor.

Towards the end of the meal, Joel having carved the wild boar ham, detached the hoof, and following an ancient custom, said to his young relative Armel, handing it to him:

"To you, Armel, belongs the bravest part! To you, the vanquisher in last evening's fight!"

At the moment when, proud of being pronounced the bravest in the presence of the stranger, Armel was stretching out his hand to take the wild boar's hoof that Joel presented to him, an exceptionally short man in the family, nicknamed "Stumpy" by reason of his small stature, observed aloud:

"Armel won in yesterday's fight because he was not fighting with Julyan. Two bullocks of equal strength avoid and fear each other, and do not lock horns."

Feeling humiliated at hearing it said of them, and before a stranger, that they did not fight together because they were mutually afraid of each other, Julyan and Armel grew red in the face.

With sparkling eyes, Julyan cried: "If I did not fight with Armel it was because someone else took my place; but Julyan fears Armel as little as Armel fears Julyan; and if you were but one inch taller, Stumpy, I would show you on the spot that, beginning with you, I fear nobody—not even my good brother Armel—"

"Good brother Julyan!" added Armel whose eyes also began to glisten, "we shall have to prove to the stranger that we do not fear each other."

"Done, Armel—let's fight with sabres and bucklers."

The two friends reached out their hands to each other and pressed them warmly. They entertained no rancor for each other; they loved each other as warmly as ever; the combat decided upon by them was a not uncommon outbreak of foolhardiness.

Joel was not sorry at seeing his kin act bravely before his guest; and his family shared his views.

At the announcement of the battle, everybody present, even the little children and young women and girls felt joyful; they clapped their hands smiling and looked at each other proud of the good opinion that the unknown visitor was to form of the courage of their family.

Mamm' Margarid thereupon addressed the young men: "The fight ends the moment I lower my distaff."

"These children are feasting you at their best, friend guest," said Joel to the stranger; "you will, in turn, have to feast them by telling them and all of us some of the marvelous things that you have seen in your travels."

"I could not do else than pay in my best coin for your hospitality, friend," answered the stranger. "I shall tell you the stories."

"Let's hurry, brother Julyan," said Armel; "I have a strong desire to hear the traveler. I can never get tired of listening to stories, but the story-tellers are rare around Karnak."

"You see, friend," said Joel, "with what impatience your stories are awaited. But before starting, and so as to give you strength, you shall presently drink to the victor with good wine of Gaul," and turning to his son: "Guilhern, fetch in the little keg of white wine from Beziers that your brother Albinik brought us on his last trip; fill up the cup in honor of the traveler.

When that was done, Joel said to Julyan and Armel:

"Now, boys, fall to with your sabres!"

CHAPTER III.

ARMEL AND JULYAN.

The numerous family of Joel, gathered in a semi-circle at one end of the spacious hall, impatiently awaited the combat, with Mamm' Margarid holding the place of honor. The stranger stood at her right, her husband at her left, and two of the smallest children before her on their knees. Margarid raised her distaff and gave the signal for the combat to begin; the lowering of the distaff was to be the signal for the combat to end.

Julyan and Armel stripped down to the waist, preserving their breeches only. Again they clasped hands. Each thereupon slung on his left arm a buckler of wood covered with seal-skin, armed himself with a heavy sabre of copper, and impetuously assailed each other, being all the more spurred by the presence of the stranger, before whom they were eager to display their skill and valor. Joel's guest looked more highly delighted than anyone else at the spectacle before him, and his face lighted with warlike animation.

Julyan and Armel were at it. Their eyes sparkled, not with hatred but with foolhardiness. They exchanged no words of anger but of friendly cheer, all the while dealing out terrible blows that would have been deadly had they not been skillfully parried. At every thrust, brilliantly made, or dexterously avoided, the men, women and children in the audience clapped their hands, and according as the combat ran, cried:

"*Her* . . . *her* . . . Julyan!"

"*Her* . . . *her* . . . Armel!"

Such was the effect of these cries, of the sight of the combat, of the clash of arms, that the huge mastiff Deber-Trud, the

man-eater, felt the ardor of battle seize also himself, and barked wildly looking up at his master, who calmed and caressed him with his hand.

Perspiration covered the young bodies of the handsome and robust Julyan and Armel. Each other's peers in courage, vigor and agility, neither had yet wounded the other.

"Let's hurry, brother Julyan!" said Armel rushing on his companion with fresh impetus. "Let us hurry to hear the pretty stories of the stranger."

"The plow can go no faster than the plowman, brother Armel," answered Julyan.

With these words, Julyan seized his sabre with both hands, stretched himself at full length, and dealt so furious a stroke to his adversary that, although the latter threw himself back and thereby softened the blow, his buckler flew into splinters and the weapon struck Armel in the temple. The wounded man staggered for an instant and then fell flat upon his back, amid the admiring cries of *"Her . . . her . . .* Julyan!" from the enraptured by-standers among whom Stumpy was the loudest with the cry of *"Her . . . her!"*

After lowering her distaff as a sign that the combat was over Mamm' Margarid stepped toward the wounded combatant to give him her attention, while Joel said to his guest, reaching him the cup:

"Friend guest, you shall drink this old wine to the triumph of Julyan."

"I drink to the triumph of Julyan and also to the valiant defeat of Armel!" responded the stranger. "The courage of the vanquished youth equals that of the vanquisher . . . I have seen many a combat, but never have I seen greater bravery and courage displayed! Glory to the family of Joel! . . . Glory to your tribe!"

"Formerly," said Joel, "these festive combats took place among us almost every day. Now they are rarer; they have been re-

placed by wrestling matches; but sabre combats better recall the habits of the old Gauls."

Mamm' Margarid shook her head after a second inspection of the wound, while Julyan steadying himself against the wall sought to hold up his friend. One of the young women hurried with a casket of lint and salves, in which was also a little vial of mistletoe water. Armel's wound bled copiously; it was staunched with difficulty; the wounded youth's face was pale and his eyes closed.

"Brother Armel," said Julyan to him in a cheerful voice, on his knees beside the prostrate Armel, "do not break down for so little . . . Each has his day and his hour . . . To-day you were wounded, to-morrow will be my turn . . . We fought bravely . . . The stranger will not forget the young men of Karnak and of the family of Joel, the brenn of the tribe."

His face down, his forehead bathed in cold perspiration, Armel seemed not to hear the voice of his friend. Mamm' Margarid again shook her head, ordered some burnt coal, that was brought her on a little flat stone and threw on it some of the pulverized mistletoe bark. A strong vapor rose from the little brasier, and Mamm' Margarid made Armel inhale it. A little after he opened his eyes, looked around as if he awoke from a dream, and said feebly:

"The angel of death calls me . . . I shall now live no longer here but yonder . . . My father and mother will be surprised and pleased to see me so soon . . . I also shall be happy to meet them."

A second later he added regretfully:

"How I would have liked to hear the pretty stories of the traveler!"

"What, brother Armel!" said Julyan, visibly astonished and grieved. "Are you to depart so soon from us? We were enjoying life so well together . . . We swore brotherhood and never to leave each other!"

"We did so swear, Julyan," Armel answered feebly, "but it is otherwise decreed."

Julyan dropped his head upon his two hands and made no answer.

Mamm' Margarid, skillful in the art of tending wounds, an art that she learned from a druid priestess her relative, placed her hand on Armel's heart. A few seconds later she said to those near her and who, together with Joel and his guest, stood around:

"Teutates calls Armel away to take him to those who have preceded us. He will soon depart. If any of us has any message for the loved ones who have preceded us yonder, and wishes Armel to carry it—let him make haste."

Mamm' Margarid thereupon kissed the forehead of the dying young man and said to him: "Give to all the members of our family the kiss of remembrance and hope."

"I shall give them, Mamm' Margarid, the kiss of remembrance and hope in your name," answered Armel in a fainting voice, and added again in a pet, "and yet I would so much have liked to hear the pretty stories of the traveler!"

These words seemed deeply to affect Julyan, who still holding his friend's head looked down upon him with sadness.

Little Sylvest, the son of Guilhern, a child of rosy cheeks and golden hair, who held with one hand the hand of his mother Henory, advanced a little and addressing the dying relative said:

"I loved little Alanik very much; he went away last year . . . Tell him that little Sylvest always remembers him, and embrace him for me, Armel."

"I shall embrace little Alanik for you, little Sylvest," and Armel added again, "and yet I would have liked to hear the pretty stories of the traveler."

Another man of Joel's family said to his expiring kinsman:

"I was a friend of Houarne of the tribe of Morlech, our neighbor. He was killed defenceless, while asleep, a short time

ago. Tell him, Armel, that Daoulas, his murderer, was discovered, was tried and condemned by the druids of Karnak and his sacrifice will soon take place. Houarne will be pleased to learn of Daoulas' punishment."

Armel signified that he would convey the message to Houarne.

Stumpy, who, not through wickedness but intemperate language, was the cause of Armel's death, also drew near with a message to the one about to depart, and said:

"You know that at the eighth face of this month's moon old Mark, who lives near Glen'han was taken ill; the angel of death told him also to prepare for a speedy departure. Old Mark was not ready. He wished to assist at the wedding of his daughter's daughter. Not being ready to go, old Mark bethought him of some one who might be ready to go in his place and that would satisfy the angel of death. He asked the druid, his physician, if he knew of some 'substitute.' The druid answered him that Gigel of Nouaren, a member of our tribe, would be available, that he might consent to depart in the place of old Mark, and that he might be induced to do so both out of kindness to Mark and to render himself agreeable to the gods, who are always pleased at the sight of such sacrifices. Gigel consented freely. Old Mark made him a present of ten pieces of silver with the stamp of a horse's head, which Gigel distributed among his friends before departing. He then cheerfully emptied his last cup and bared his breast to the sacred knife amid the chants of the bards. The angel of death accepted the substitute. Old Mark attended the wedding of his daughter's daughter, and to-day he is in good health—"

"Do you mean to say that you are willing to depart in my stead, Stumpy?" asked the dying warrior. "I fear it is now too late—"

"No, no; I am not ready to depart in your stead," Stumpy hastened to answer. "I only wish to request you to return to Gigel three pieces of silver that I owed him; I could not repay him sooner. I feared Gigel might come and demand his money by moonlight in the shape of some demon." Saying which

Stumpy rummaged in his lamb-skin bag, took out three pieces with the stamp of a horse's head, and placed them in the pocket of Armel's breeches.

"I shall hand your three pieces of silver to Gigel," said Armel in a voice now hardly audible; and for a last time he murmured at Julyan's ear: "And yet . . . I would . . . have liked . . . to hear . . . the pretty stories . . . of . . . the traveler."

"Be at ease, brother Armel," Julyan answered him; "I shall attentively listen to the pretty stories so that I may remember them well; and to-morrow . . . I shall depart and tell them to you . . . I would weary here without you . . . We swore brotherhood to each other, and never to be separated; I shall follow you and continue to live yonder in your company."

"Truly . . . you will come?" said the dying youth, whom the promise seemed to render happy; "will you come . . . to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, by Hesus . . . I swear to you, Armel, I shall come."

The eyes of the whole family turned to Julyan at hearing the promise, and looked lovingly upon him. The wounded youth seemed the most pleased of all, and with his last breath said:

"So long, then, brother Julyan . . . listen attentively . . . to the stories . . . And now . . . farewell . . . farewell . . . to all of you of our tribe," and Armel sought to suit the motion of his hands to his words.

As loving relatives and friends crowd around one of their own when he is about to depart on a long journey, during which he will meet people of whom they all preserve a cherished remembrance, each now pressed the hand of Armel and gave him some tender commission for those of their tribe whom he was about to meet again.

After Armel was dead, Joel closed the youth's eyes and had him taken to the altar of grey stones, above which stood the copper bowl with the seven twigs of misletoe.

The body was then covered with oak branches taken from the altar, so that, instead of the corpse, only a heap of verdure met the eye, with Julyan seated close to it.

Finally, the head of the family filled the large cup up to the brim, moistened his lips in it and said to the stranger: "May Armel's journey be a happy one; he has ever been good and just; may he traverse under the guidance of Teutates the marvelous regions and countries that lie beyond the grave which none of us has yet traveled over, and which all of us will yet see. May Armel meet again those whom we have loved, and let him assure them that we love them still!"

The cup went around; the women and young girls expressed their good wishes to Armel on his journey; the remains of the supper were removed; and all gathered at the hearth, impatient to hear the promised stories told by the stranger.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF ALBREGE.

"Is it a story that you want of me?" asked the unknown guest turning to Joel, and seeing the eyes of all fixed upon himself.

"One story?" cried Joel. "Tell us twenty, a hundred! You must have seen so much! so many countries! so many peoples! One story only? Ah, by the good Ormi, you shall not be let off with only one story, friend guest!"

"Oh, no!" cried the family in chorus and with set determination. "Oh, no! We must have more than one!"

"And yet," observed the stranger with a pensive and severe mien, "there is more serious work in hand than to tell and listen to frivolous stories."

"I understand not what you mean," said Joel no less taken back than his family; all turned their eyes upon the stranger in silent amazement.

"No, you do not understand me," replied the stranger sadly. "Nevertheless, I shall keep my promise—the thing promised is a thing done"; and pointing to Julyan who had remained at the other end of the hall near the oak-covered body of Armel he added: "We must see to it that that young man has something to tell his brother when he joins him beyond."

"Proceed, guest, proceed with your story," answered Julyan, without raising his head from his hands; "proceed with your story; I shall not lose a word . . . Armel shall hear it just as you tell it."

"Two years ago," said the stranger, beginning his story, "while traveling among the Gauls who inhabit the borders of the Rhine, I happened one day to be at Strasburg. I had gone out of the

town for a walk along the river bank. Presently I saw a large crowd of people moving in the direction of where I stood. They were following a man and woman, both young and both handsome, who carried on a buckler, that they held by the edges, a little baby not more than three or four months old. The man looked restless and somber; the woman pale and calm. Both stopped at the river's bank, at a spot where the stream runs especially rapid. The crowd also stopped. I drew near and inquired who the man and woman were. 'The man's name is Vindorix, the woman's Albrege; they are man and wife,' was the answer I received. I then saw Vindorix, whose countenance waxed more and more somber, approach his wife and say to her:

"'This is the time.'

"'Do you wish it?' asked Albrege. 'Do you wish it?'

"'Yes,' answered the husband; 'I doubt—I want to be certain.'

"'Then, be it so,' said she.

"Thereupon, himself taking the buckler where the little child lay, smiling and stretching out its chubby arms to him, Vindorix walked into the river up to his waist, raised the buckler and child for a moment over his head, and looked back a last time towards his wife, as if to threaten her with what he was about to do. With her forehead high and a steady countenance, Albrege remained erect at the river bank, motionless like a statue, her arms crossed upon her bosom. When her husband now turned to her she stretched out her right hand towards him as if to say:

"'Do it!'

"At that moment a shudder ran over the crowd. Vindorix deposited upon the stream the buckler on which lay the child, and in that frail craft left the infant to the mercy of the eddies."

"Oh, the wicked man!" cried Mamm' Margarid deeply moved by the story as were the other hearers. "And his wife! . . . his wife . . . who remained on the bank?—"

"But what was the reason of such a barbarity, friend guest?" asked Henory, the young wife of Guilhern embracing her two children, little Sylvest and little Syomara, both of whom she took on her knees as if fearing to see them exposed to a similar danger.

With a gesture the stranger put an end to the interrogatories, and proceeded:

"The stream had barely carried away the buckler on which the child lay, than the father raised both his trembling hands to heaven as if to invoke the gods. He followed the course of the buckler with sullen anxiety, leaning, despite himself, to the right when the buckler dipped to the right, and to the left when the buckler dipped on that side. The mother, on the contrary, her arms crossed over her bosom, followed the buckler with firm eyes, and as tranquil as if she had nothing to fear for her child."

"Nothing to fear!" cried Guilhern. "To see her child thus exposed to almost certain death . . . it is bound to go under . . ."

"That must have been an unnatural mother," cried Henory.

"And not one man in all that crowd to jump into the water and save the child!" observed Julyan thinking of his friend. "Oh, that will surely anger the heart of Armel, when I tell him that."

"But do not interrupt every instant!" cried Joel. "Proceed, my guest; may Teutates, who presides over all journeys made in this world and in the others, guard the poor little thing!"

"Twice," the stranger proceeded, "the buckler threatened to be swallowed up by the eddies of the rapid stream. Of all present, only the mother moved not a muscle. Presently the buckler was seen riding the waters like an airy skiff and peacefully following the course of the stream beyond the rapids. Immediately the crowd cried, beating their hands:

" 'The boat! The boat!'

"Two men ran down the bank, pushed off a boat, and swiftly

plying their oars, quickly reached the buckler, and took it up from the water together with the child that had fallen asleep—"

"Thanks to the gods! The child is saved!" exclaimed almost in chorus the family of Joel, as if delivered from a painful apprehension.

Perceiving that he was about to be again interrupted by fresh questions, the stranger hastened to resume his narrative.

"While the buckler and child were being taken from the water, its father Vindorix, whose face was now as radiant with joy as it was somber until then, ran to his wife, and stretching out his arms to her said:

"'Albrege! . . . Albrege! . . . You told me the truth . . . You were faithful!'

"But repelling her husband with an imperious gesture, Albrege answered him proudly: 'Certain of my honor, I did not fear the trial . . . I felt at ease on my child's fate. The gods could not punish an innocent woman with the loss of her child . . . But . . . *a woman suspected is a woman outraged* . . . I shall keep my child. You never more shall see us, nor him, nor me . . . You have doubted your wife's honor!"

"The child was just then brought in triumph. Its mother threw herself upon it, like a lioness upon her whelp; pressed it closely to her heart; so calm and peaceful as she had been until then, so violent was she now with the caresses that she showered upon the baby, with whom she now fled away."

"O, that was a true daughter of Gaul!" said Guilhern's wife. "A woman suspected is a woman outraged. Those are proud words . . . I like to hear them!"

"But," asked Joel, "is that trial one of the customs of the Gauls along the Rhine?"

"Yes," answered the stranger; "the husband who suspects his wife of having dishonored his bed, places the baby upon a buckler and exposes it to the current of the river. If the child remains afloat, the wife's innocence is proved; if it sinks under the waves, the mother's crime is considered established."

"And how was that brave wife clad, friend guest?" asked Henory. "Did she wear a tunic like ours?"

"No," answered the stranger; "the tunics in that region are very short and of two colors. The corsage is generally blue, the skirt red. The latter is often embroidered with gold and silver thread."

"And their head-gear?" asked one of the young girls. "Are they white and cut square like our own?"

"No; they are black and bell-shaped, and they are also embroidered in gold and silver."

"And the bucklers?" queried Guilhern. "Are they like ours?"

"There are longer, and they are painted with lively colors, usually arranged in squares. Red and white is a very common combination."

"And the marriages, how are they celebrated?" inquired another young girl.

"And the cattle, are they as fine as ours?" an old man wanted to know.

"And have they like us brave fighting cocks?" asked a child.

The stranger was being assailed with such a shower of questions that Joel said to the questioners:

"Enough; enough . . . Let our friend regain his breath. You are screaming around him like a flock of sea-gulls."

"Do they pay, as we do, the money they owe the dead?" asked Stumpy, despite Joel's orders to cease questioning the stranger.

"Yes; their custom and ours is the same as here," answered the stranger; "and they are not idolaters like a man from Asia whom I met at Marseilles, and who claimed that, according to his religion, we continued to live after death, but not clad in human shape, according to him we were clad in the form of animals."

"Her! . . . Her!" cried Stumpy in great trouble. "If it were as those idolatrous people claim, then Gigel, who departed instead of old Mark, may be now inhabiting the body of a

fish; and I would have sent him three pieces of silver with Armel who might now be inhabiting the body of a bird. How could a bird deliver silver pieces to a fish. *Her!* . . . *Her!*"

"Our friend told you that that belief is idolatry, Stumpy," put in Joel with severity; "your fear is impious."

"It must be so," said Julyan sadly. "What would I become who am to proceed to-morrow to meet Armel by oath and out of friendship, were I to find him turned into a bird while I may be turned into a stag of the woods or an ox of the fields?"

"Fear not, young man," said the stranger to Julyan, "the religion of Hesus is the only true religion; it teaches us that after death we are reclad in younger and handsomer bodies."

"I pin my hopes on that!" said Stumpy,

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF SYOMARA.

The storm of questions had spent itself and the thirst for fresh stories returned among the assembled family of Joel, whose head remarked with wonderment: "What a thing traveling is? How much one learns; but we must not lag behind our guest. Story for story. Proud Gallic woman for proud Gallic woman. Friend guest, ask Mamm' Margarid to tell you the beautiful story and deed of one of her own female ancestors, which happened about a hundred and thirty years ago when our fathers went as far as Asia to found a new Gaul, because you must know that few are the countries on earth that their soles have not trod upon."

"After your wife's story," answered the stranger, "and seeing that you wish to speak of our own ancestors, I shall also speak of them . . . and by Ritha Gaür! . . . never would the time be fitter. While we are here telling stories, you do not seem to know what is going on elsewhere in the land; you do not know that perhaps at this very moment—"

"Why do you interrupt yourself?" asked Joel wondering at the suddenness with which his guest broke off in the middle of the sentence. "What is going on while we are here telling stories? What better can we do at the corner of our hearth during an autumn evening?"

Instead of answering Joel, the stranger respectfully said to Mamm' Margarid:

"I shall listen to the story of Joel's wife."

"It is a very short and simple story," answered Margarid plying her distaff. "The story is as simple as the action of my ancestral grandmother. Her name was Syomara."

"And in honor of her," said Guilhern breaking in upon his mother and proudly pointing the stranger to an eight year old child of surprising beauty, "in honor of our ancestral grandmother Syomara, who was as beautiful as she was brave, I have given her name to this little girl of mine."

"This is indeed a most charming child," remarked the stranger struck by the lovely face of little Syomara. "I am sure she will have her grandmother's valor in the same degree that she is endowed with her beauty."

Henory, the child's mother blushed with joy at these words and said smiling to Mamm' Margarid:

"I dare not blame Guilhern for having interrupted you; it brought on the pretty compliment."

"The compliment is as sweet to me as to you, my daughter," answered Mamm' Margarid; saying which she began her story:

"My grandmother's name was Syomara; she was the daughter of Ronan. Her father had taken her into lower Languedoc whither his traffic called him. The Gauls of the neighborhood were just preparing for the expedition to the East. Their chief, Oriegon by name, saw my grandmother, was fascinated by her beauty, won her love and married her. Syomara departed with her husband on the expedition to the East. At first they triumphed. Afterwards, the Romans, who were ever jealous of the Gallic possessions, attacked our fathers. In one of the battles, Syomara, who, led thereto both by duty and love, accompanied Oriegon, her husband, to battle in a war-chariot, was separated from her husband during the fray, taken prisoner, and placed under the guard of a Roman officer, who was a miser and a libertine. The Roman, who was captivated by the beauty of Syomara, attempted to seduce her; but she repelled his advances with contempt. He then surprised his captive during her sleep and outraged her—"

"Listen, Joel!" cried the stranger indignantly. "Listen to that! . . . A Roman subjects an ancestor of your wife to such indignity!"

"Listen to the end of the story, friend guest," said Joel; "you will see that Syomara is the peer of the Gallic woman of the Rhine."

"The one and the other," Margarid proceeded, "showed themselves true to the maxim that there are three kinds of chastity among the women of Gaul: The first, when a father says in the presence of his daughter that he grants her hand to him whom she loves; the second, when for the first time she enters her husband's bed; and the third, when she appears the next morning before other men. The Roman had outraged Syomara, his prisoner. His passion being satisfied, he offered her freedom upon payment of a ransom. She accepted the offer and induced the Roman to send her servant, a prisoner like herself, to the camp of the Gauls and tell Oriegon or, in his absence, any of his friends, to bring the ransom to an appointed place. The servant departed to the camp of the Gauls. The miserly Roman, wishing himself to receive the ransom and not share it with anyone else, led Syomara alone to the appointed place. The friends of Oriegon were there with the gold for the ransom. While the Roman was counting the gold, Syomara addressed the Gauls in their own tongue and ordered them to kill the infamous man. Her orders were executed on the spot. Syomara then cut off his head, placed it in a fold of her dress and returned to the camp of her people. Oriegon, who had himself been also taken prisoner and managed to escape, arrived in camp at the same time as his wife. At the sight of her husband, Syomara dropped the head of the Roman at his feet and addressed Oriegon saying: 'That is the head of a man who outraged me . . . There is none but you who can say that he possessed me.'"

At the close of her narrative, Mamm' Margarid continued to spin in silence.

"Did I not tell you, friend," said Joel, "that Syomara, Margarid's grandmother, was the peer of your Gallic woman of the Rhine?"

"And must not the noble name bring good luck to my daughter!" added Guilhern tenderly kissing the blonde head of the child.

"That powerful and chaste story is worthy of the lips that told it," said the stranger. "It also proves that the Romans, our implacable enemies, have not changed. Avaricious and debauched were they once—and are to-day. And seeing that we are speaking of the avaricious and debauched Romans and that you love stories," he added with a bitter smile, "you must know that I have been in Rome . . . and that I saw . . . Julius Cæsar . . . the most famous of the Roman generals, as also the most avaricious and and the most debauched man of all Italy. I would not venture to speak of his infamous acts of libertinage before women and young girls."

"Oh! Did you see that famous Julius Cæsar? What kind of a looking man is he?" asked Joel with great inquisitiveness.

The stranger looked at the brenn as if greatly surprised at the question, and answered with an effort to suppress his anger:

"Cæsar is nearing old age; he is tall of stature; his face is lean and long; his complexion pale; his eyes black; his head bald. Seeing the man combines in his person all the vices of the worst women of the Romans, he is possessed, like them, of extraordinary personal vanity. Accordingly, in order to conceal his baldness, he ever carries a chaplet of gold leaves on his head. Is your inquisitiveness satisfied, Joel? Would you want more details about Cæsar's infirmities? That he is subject to epileptic fits? . . . That—"

But the stranger did not finish his sentence. Letting his eyes wander over the assembled family of the brenn, he cried with towering rage:

"By the anger of Hesus! Can it be that all of you—as many as you are here capable of seizing the sabre and the sword but insatiable after idle stories—can it be you do not know that a Roman army, after having invaded under the command of Cæsar

one-half of our provinces, has taken winter quarters in the country of Orleans, of Touraine and of Anjou?"

"Yes, yes; we have heard about it," calmly said Joel. "People from Anjou, who came here to buy beef and pork, told us about it."

"And it is with such unconcern that you speak of the Roman invasion of Gaul?" cried the traveler.

"Never have the Breton Gauls been invaded by strangers," proudly answered the brenn of the tribe of Karnak. "We shall remain spotless of the taint. We are independent of the Gauls of Piotou, of Touraine, of Orleans and of the other sections of the land, just as they are independent of us. They have not asked for our help. We are not so constituted as to offer ourselves to their chiefs and to fight under them. Let everyone guard his own honor and his own province. The Romans are in Touraine . . . but it is a long way from Touraine to here."

"So that if the pirates of the North were to kill your son Albinik the sailor and his brave wife Meroë, it would no wise concern you because the murder was committed far from here?"

"You are joking. My son is my son . . . The Gauls of provinces other than mine are not my sons!"

"Are they not, like yourself, the sons of the same god, as the druid religion teaches you? If that is so, are not all the Gauls your brothers? And does not the subjugation, does not the blood of a brother cry for vengeance? Are you unconcerned because the enemy is not at the very gates of your own homestead? On that principle, the hand, even when it knows that the foot is gangrened, could say to itself: 'As to me, I am well, and the foot is far from the hand—I need not worry over the disease.' And the gangrene, not being stopped, rises from the foot to the other members, until the whole body perishes."

"Unless the healthy hand take an axe," said the brenn, "and cut off the foot from which the evil proceeds."

"And what becomes of the body that is thus mutilated, Joel?" put in Mamm' Margarid who all the while had been listening in

silence. "When the best regions of the country shall have been invaded by the stranger, what will then become of the rest of Gaul? Thus mutilated and dismembered, how will she defend herself against her enemies?"

"The worthy spouse of my host speaks wisely," said the traveler respectfully to Mamm' Margarid; "like all Gallic matrons she holds her place at the public council as well as at her hearth."

"You speak truly," rejoined Joel, "Margarid has a brave heart and a wise head. Often her opinion is better than mine . . . I gladly say so . . . But this time I am right. Whatever may happen to the rest of Gaul, never will the Romans set foot in our old Britanny. There are her rocks, her marshes, her woods, her sand banks—above all her Bretons to defend her."

At these words of her husband Mamm' Margarid shook her head disapprovingly; all the men of the family, however, loudly applauded their brenn's words.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORY OF GAUL.

When the noisy and martial ardor, evoked by the boastful words of the brenn of the tribe of Karnak had subsided, the traveler was seen sitting in somber silence. He looked up and said:

"Very well, one more and last story, but let this one fall upon the hearts of you all like burning brass, seeing that the wise words of this household's matron have proved futile."

All looked with surprise at the stranger, who with somber and severe mien began his story with these words:

"Once upon a time, as far back as two or three thousand years, there lived a family here in Gaul. Whence did it come, to fill the vast solitudes that to-day are so populous? It doubtlessly came from the heart of Asia, that ancient cradle of the human races, now, however, hidden in the night of antiquity. That family ever preserved a type peculiar to itself, and found with no other people of the world. Loyal, hospitable, generous, vivacious, gay, inclined to humor, loving to tell, above all, to hear stories, intrepid in battle, daring death more heroically than any other nation, because its religion taught it what death was—such were that family's virtues. Giddy-headed, vagabond, presumptuous, inconsistent, curious after novelty, and greedier yet of seeing than of conquering unknown countries, as easily uniting as falling apart, too proud and too fickle to adjust its opinions to those of its neighbors, or if consenting thereto, incapable of long marching in concert with them, although common and vital interests be at stake—such are that family's vices. In point of its virtues and in point of its vices, thus has it

always been since the remotest centuries; thus is it to-day; thus will it be to-morrow."

"Oh, oh! If I am not much mistaken," broke in the brenn smiling, "all of us, Gauls though we may be, must have some cousin red with that family."

"Yes," said the stranger, "to its own misfortune—and to the joy of its enemies—such has been and such is to-day the character of our own people!"

"But at least admit, despite such a character, the dear Gallic people has made its way well through the world. Few are the countries where the inquisitive vagabond, as you call it, did not promenade his shoes, with his nose in the air, his sword at his side—"

"You are right. Such is its spirit of adventure: always marching ahead towards the unknown, rather than to stop and build. Thus, to-day, one-third of Gaul is in the hands of the Romans, while some centuries ago the Gallic race occupied through its headlong conquests, besides Gaul, England, Ireland, upper Italy, the banks of the Danube, and the countries along the sea border as far east and north as Denmark. Nor yet was that enough. It looked as if our race was to spread itself over the the whole world. The Gauls of the Danube went into Macedonia, into Thrace, into Thessaly. Others of them crossed the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, reached Asia Minor, founded New Gaul, and thus became the arbiters of all the kingdoms of the East."

"So far, meseems", rejoined the brenn, "we have nothing to regret over our character that you so severely judge."

"And what is left of those senseless battles, undertaken by the pride of the kings who then reigned over the Gauls?" the stranger proceeded looking around. "Have not the distant conquests slipped from us? Have not our implacable and ever more powerful enemies, the Romans, raised all the peoples against us? Have we not been compelled to abandon those useless possessions—Asia, Greece, Germany, Italy? That is the net result of so much

heroism and so much blood! That is the pass to which we have been brought by the ambition of the kings, who usurped the power of the druids!"

"To that I have nothing to say. You are right. There was no need of promenading so far away only to soil the soles of our shoes with the blood and the dust of foreign lands. But if I am not mistaken, it was at about that time that the sons of the brave Ritha Gaür, who had a blouse made for himself of the beards of the kings whom he shaved, seeing in these the butchers of the people and not its shepherds, overthrew the royalty."

"Yes, thanks to the gods, an epoch of real grandeur, of peace and of prosperity succeeded the barren and bloody conquests of the kings. Disembarassed of its useless possessions, reduced to rational limits—its natural frontiers—the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Ocean—the republic of the Gauls became the queen and envy of the world. Its fertile soil, cultivated as we so well know how, produced everything in abundance; the rivers were covered with merchant vessels; gold, silver and copper mines increased its wealth every day; large cities rose everywhere. The druids, spreading light in all directions, preached union to the provinces, and set the example by convoking once a year in the center of Gaul solemn assemblies, at which the general interests of the country were considered. Each tribe, each canton, each town, elected its own magistrates; each province was a republic which, according to the druid plan, merged into the great Republic of the Gauls, and thus constituted one powerful body through the union of all."

"The fathers of our grandfathers saw those happy days, friend guest."

"And their sons saw only ruins and misfortune! What has happened? The accursed stock of dethroned kings joins the stock of their former and no less accursed clients or seigneurs, and all of them, irritated at having been deposed of their authority, hope for restoration from the public misfortunes, and exploit with infamous perfidy our innate pride and lack of discipline, which,

under the powerful influence of the druids, were being steadily corrected. The rivalries between province and province, long allayed re-awakened; jealousies and hatreds sprang up anew; everywhere the structure of union began to crumble. For all this the kings do not re-ascend the throne. Many of their descendants are even judicially executed. But they have unchained internal feud. Civil war flares up. The more powerful provinces seek to subjugate the weaker. Thus, towards the end of the last century, the Marseillians, the descendants of the exiled Greeks to whom Gaul generously assigned the territory on which they built their town, sought to assume the rôle of sovereignty. The province rose against the town; finding herself in danger, Marseilles called the Romans to her aid. They came, not to sustain Marseilles in her contemplated iniquity, but to themselves take possession of the region, a purpose that they succeeded in, despite the prodigies of valor with which they were opposed. Established in Provence, the Romans built the town of Aix, and thus founded their first colony on our soil—"

"Oh, a curse upon the Marseillians!" cried Joel. "It was thanks to those sons of Greeks that the Romans gained a foothold in Gaul!"

"By what right can we curse the people of Marseilles? Must not also those provinces be cursed which, since the decline of the republic, thus allowed one of their sisters to be overpowered and subjugated? But retribution was swift. Encouraged by the indifference of the Gauls, the Romans took possession of Auvergne, and later of the Dauphinè, and a little later also of Languedoc and Vivarais despite the heroic defence of their peoples, who, besides being divided among themselves, were left to their own resources. Thus the Romans became masters of almost all southern Gaul; they govern it by their proconsuls and reduce its people to slavery. Do the other provinces at last take alarm at these ominous invasions of Rome that push ever forward and threaten the very heart of Gaul? No! No! Relying upon their own courage, they say as you, Joel, did shortly ago: 'The South

lies far away from the North, the East lies far away from the West.' This notwithstanding, our race, which is heedless and presumptuous enough to fail to prepare in advance, and when it is still time, against foreign domination, always has the belated courage of rebelling when the yoke is actually placed upon its neck. The provinces that have been subjugated by the Romans, break out in resolute rebellion; these are smothered in their own blood. Our disasters follow swiftly upon one another. The Burgundians, incited thereto by the descendants of the old kings, take up arms against the Frank-Compté and invoke the aid of the Romans. The Frank-Compté, unable to make head against such an alliance, requests reinforcements from the Germans of the other side of the Rhine. Thus these barbarians of the North are taught the road to Gaul, and after bloody battles with the very people who invited them, remain masters of both Burgundy and Frank-Compté. Last year, the Swiss, encouraged by the example of the Germans, make an irruption into the Gallic provinces that had been conquered by the Romans. Thereupon, Julius Caeser is appointed proconsul; he hastens from Italy; owerthrows the Swiss in their mountains; drives the Germans out of Burgundy and Frank-Compté; takes possession of these provinces, now exhausted by their long struggles with the barbarians; and to the yoke of these now succeeds that of the Romans. It was a change of masters. And finally, at the beginning of this year a portion of Gaul shakes off its lethargy and scents the dangers that threatens the still independent provinces. Brave patriots, wanting neither Romans nor Germans for their masters—Galba among the Gauls of Belgium, Boddig-nat among the Gauls of Flanders—induce the people to rise in mass against Caesar. The Gauls of Vermandois and those of Artois also rise in rebellion. Together they all march against the Romans! Oh, it was a great and terrible battle, that battle of the Sambre!" cried the unknown traveler with exaltation. "The Gallic army awaited Caesar on the left bank of the river. Three times did the Roman army cross, and three times was it compelled to re-

cross it, fighting up to their waists in the blood-reddened waters. The Roman is overthrown, the oldest legions are shattered. Caesar alights from his horse, swings his sword, rallies his last cohorts of veterans, that already were yielding ground, and at their head charges upon our army. Despite Caesar's courage the battle was lost to him, when we saw a fresh body arrive to his aid."

"You say 'We saw'?" asked Joel. "Were you at that terrible battle?"

But the unknown visitor proceeded without answering: "Exhausted, decimated by a seven hours' fight, we still held out against the fresh troops . . . we fought to the bitter end . . . we fought unto death . . . And do you know," added the stranger with an expression of profound grief, "do you know, you who remained peacefully at home, while your brothers were dying for the liberty of Gaul, which is also yours,—do you know how many survived of the sixty thousand men in the Gallic army—in that battle of the Sambre? . . . *Not five hundred!*"

"Not five hundred!" cried Joel as if questioning the figures.

"I say so because I am one of the survivors", answered the stranger proudly.

"Then the two fresh scars on your face—"

"I received them at the battle of the Sambre—"

CHAPTER VII.

"WAR! WAR! WAR!"

A furious barking of dogs in the yard and a distinct noise of hard rapping at the gate of the palisade interrupted the stranger's narrative. Still laboring under the painful impression of the traveler's words, the family of the brenn for a moment imagined their homestead was being attacked. The women rose precipitately, the little ones rushed to their mothers' arms, the men ran for their arms that hung from the walls. But the dogs soon ceased barking, although the rapping at the gate continued unabated. Joel said to his family:

"Although they are still rapping, the dogs do not bark. They must know who is at the gate."

Saying this, the brenn stepped out. Several of his kinsmen, the stranger included, followed him out of prudence. The yard gate was opened and two voices were heard outside the palisades crying:

"It is we, friends, . . . Albinik and Mikael."

Indeed the two sons of the brenn were distinguished by the light of the torches, and behind them their horses, panting for breath and white with foam. After tenderly embracing his sons, especially the mariner, who was absent over a year on his sea journeys, Joel entered the house with them, where they were received with joy and not a little surprise by their mother and other relatives.

Albinik the mariner and Mikael the armorer were, like their father and their brother, men of large and robust stature. Over their clothes they carried a caped cloak of heavy woolen fabric streaming with the rain. Upon entering the house, and even before embracing their mother, the new arrivals stepped to the

altar and approached their lips to the seven small twigs of mistletoe that stood dipped in the copper bowl on the large stone. They there noticed a lifeless body covered with oak branches, near which Julyan still sat.

"Good evening, Julyan," said Mikael. "Who is dead?"

"It is Armel; I killed him this evening in a sword contest," answered Julyan; "but as we have both pledged brotherhood to each other, I shall join him to-morrow beyond. If you wish it I shall mention you to him."

"Yes, yes. Julyan; I loved Armel and expected to find him alive. In the bag on my horse I have a little harpoon head of iron that I forged for him; I shall place it to-morrow on the pyre of you two—"

"And you must tell Armel," added the mariner smiling, "that he went away too soon; his friends Albinik and Meroë would have told him their last experience at sea."

"It is Armel and myself," replied Julyan with a smile, "who will later have pretty stories to tell you. Your sea trips will be like nothing to the travels that await us in those marvelous worlds that none has seen and all will see."

After Margarid's two sons had answered the tender inquiries of their mother and family, the brenn said to the unknown traveler:

"Friend, these are my two sons."

"May it please heaven that the suddenness of their arrival may not be caused by some evil event," answered the traveler.

"I say so, too, my children," rejoined Joel. "What has happened that you come at so late an hour and in such hurry? Happy be your return, Albinik, but I did not expect it so soon. But where is the gentle Meroë?"

"I left her at Vannes, father. This is what has happened. I returned from Spain by the gulf of Gascony on the way to England. The bad weather forced us to put in at Vannes. But by Teutates, who presides over all journeys by land and

sea, here on earth and beyond, I did not expect—no, I did not expect to see what I saw in that town. I, therefore, left my vessel in port in charge of my sailors with my wife as their chief, I took a horse and galloped to Auray. There I gave the news to Mikael, and we hastened hither to forewarn you, father."

"And what is it you saw at Vannes?"

"What did I see? All the inhabitants, in revolt, full of indignation and rage, like the brave Bretons that they are!"

"And what is the reason of it all, children?" asked Mamm' Margarid without leaving her distaff.

"Four Roman officers, without any other escort than four soldiers and as calmly insolent as if they were in some enslaved country, came in yesterday and commanded the magistrates of the town to issue orders to all the neighboring tribes to send to Vannes ten thousand bags of wheat—"

"And what else?" asked Joel laughing and shrugging his shoulders.

"Five thousand bags of oats."

"And what else?"

"Five hundred barrels of hydromel."

"Of course," said the brenn laughing louder, "they must also drink—and what else?"

"A thousand heads of beef."

"And, of course, the fattest—What else?"

"Five thousand sheep."

"That's right. One soon gets tired of beef only. Is that all, my boy?"

"They also demanded three hundred horses to furnish new equipages to the Roman cavalry, besides two hundred wagons of forage."

"And why not? The poor horses must be fed," continued Joel sneeringly. "But there must be some more orders. If they begin to issue orders, why stop at all?"

"The provisions were to be taken in wagons as far as Poitou and Touraine."

"And what is the wide maw that is to swallow up those bags of wheat, those muttons, those heads of beef and those barrels of hydromel?"

"Above all," added the traveler, "who is to pay for all those provisions?"

"Pay for them!" replied Albinik. "Why, nobody. It is a forced impost."

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Joel.

"And the wide maw that is to gulp up the provisions is none other than the Roman army, which is wintering in Touraine and Anjou."

A shudder of rage mixed with disdain ran through the family of the brenn. "Well, Joel," the unknown traveler remarked, "do you still think that it is a long way from Touraine to Britanny? The distance does not seem to me long, seeing that the officers of Cæsar come calmly and without escort, empty-pursed and swinging high their canes, to provision their army here."

Joel no longer laughed; he dropped his head and remained silent.

"Our guest is right," put in Albinik; "these Romans came empty-pursed and swinging high their canes. One of them even raised his cane over old Ronan, the oldest magistrate of Vannes, who, like you, father, objected strongly to the Roman exaction."

"And yet, children, what else can we do but laugh at these demands. To levy these provisionings upon us and the neighboring tribes of Vannes; to force us to carry the requisitions to Touraine and Anjou with our oxen and horses which the Romans will surely keep also, and all that at the very season of the late sowing and of our autumn labors; to ruin next year's harvest;—why, that is to reduce us to living upon the grass that would have fed the cattle that they rob us of!"

"Yes," said Mikael the armorer; "they want to take away our wheat and our cattle, and leave the grass to us. By the iron of the lance that I was forging this very morning, it shall be the Romans who, under our blows, will bite the grass on our fields!"

"Vannes is now preparing to defend herself if attacked," added the mariner. "They have begun to throw up trenches in the neighborhood of the port. All our sailors are to be armed, and if the Roman galleys attack us by sea, never will the sea crows have had a like feast of corpses upon our beach."

"While crossing to-night the other tribes,' resumed Mikael, "we spread the news and sounded the alarm. The magistrates of Vannes have also sent out messengers in all direction ordering that fires be lighted from hill to hill, and thereby give immediate notice of the imminent danger from one end of Britanny to the other."

Without once dropping her distaff, Mamm' Margarid had listened to the report given by her sons. When they stopped speaking she calmly said:

"As to those Roman officers, my sons, were they not sent back to their army—after a thorough caning?"

"No, mother; they were lodged in jail at Vannes, all except two of their soldiers whom the magistrates charged to declare to the Roman general that no provisions whatever were to be furnished him, and that his officers were to be as hostages."

"It would have been better to give the officers a thorough caning and drive them in disgrace out of the town," replied Mamm' Margarid. "That is the way thieves are treated, and these Romans tried to rob us."

"You are right, Margarid," said Joel; "they came to rob us—to starve us! to carry away our harvests and our cattle!" And Joel, now in a towering rage, added: "By the vengeance of Hesus! To think of their taking our fine turn-out of six young oxen with skins slick as wolves! Our four yokes of black bulls

that have such a beautiful white star in the center of their foreheads!"

"And our beautiful white heifers with yellow heads!" said Mamm' Margarid shrugging her shoulders and never quitting her distaff, "our sheep whose fleece is so nice and thick . . . Come, a good caning for these Romans!"

"And the powerful horses of the stock of your magnificent stallion Tom-Bras," put in the traveler. "They will, after all, have to draw your harvest to Touraine, and will then serve to replace the worn-out horses of the Roman cavalry . . . True, to them, the labor will not be excessive . . . because you will now probably discover that it is not far from Touraine to Britanny."

"Well may you mock, friend," said Joel. "You were right, and I confess myself to have been wrong. Oh! If only the provinces of Gaul had from the start confederated themselves against the first assault of the Romans! If united they had put forth but one-half the efforts that they put forth separately—we would not now be exposed to the insolent demands and to the threats of these heathens! Well may you mock!"

"No, Joel, I will mock no longer," gravely answered the traveler. "The danger is near; the hostile camp lies only a twelve day's march from here; the refusal of the magistrates of Vannes and the imprisonment of the Roman officers—all that means speedy war—a merciless war, as only the Romans know how to wage! If we are vanquished it means to us death on the battle field, or slavery far away! The slave merchants follow the tracks of the Roman army; they are greedy after prey. Whatever survives, whether whole or wounded—men, young women, girls, children—all are sold at auction like cattle for the benefit of the vanquisher, and are forthwith consigned by the thousands to Italy or to Southern Gaul where the Romans are settled! Arrived at their destination, the male slaves of robust frame are often forced to fight ferocious animals in the

circus for the amusement of their masters; the young women and girls, even the children are subjected to monstrous debaucheries. Such is war with the Romans if vanquished!" cried the stranger. "Will you allow yourselves to be vanquished? Will you submit to such disgrace? Will you deliver to them your wives, your sisters, your daughters and children, ye Gauls of Britanny?"

Hardly had the traveler uttered these words when the whole family of Joel—men, women, young girls, children—all down to the dwarfy Stumpy, rose to their feet and with their eyes shooting fire, their cheeks inflamed, cried tumultuously, waving their arms:

"War! War! War!"

Joel's large battle mastiff, fired by these cries, rose on his hind legs and laid his fore-paws on the breast of his master, who, while caressing his enormous head said:

"Yes, old Deber-Trud, like our tribe you will hunt the Romans . . . The quarry shall be for you . . . Your jaws shall be red with blood! . . . Wow! Wow, Deber-Trud! At the Romans! At the Romans!"

Hearing the well-known war-cry, the mastiff responded with furious barks, displaying fangs as redoubtable as a lion's. Hearing Deber-Trud, the outside watch-dogs, as well as those locked up in the kennels, answered him. Frightful was the war-cry raised by the pack.

"A good omen, friend Joel," observed the traveler. "Your dogs bark death to the enemy."

"Yes, yes; death to the enemy!" cried the brenn. "Thanks be to the gods, in our Breton Gaul, on the day of peril, the watch-dog becomes a war-dog! the draw-horse becomes a war-horse! the ox of the field a war-ox! the harvest carts chariots of war! the laborer a warrior! even our peaceful and fruitful earth turns to war and devours the stranger! at every step he finds a grave in our fathomless marshes, and his vessels vanish in the

whirlpools of our bays which are more terrible in their calm than in the tempest of their fury!"

"Joel," now said Julyan, who had left the body of his friend, "I promised Armel to meet him to-morrow yonder—Such a death would be pleasant to me . . . To die fighting the Romans is a duty . . . What shall I do?"

"Ask to-morrow one of the druids of Karnak."

"And our sister Hena," said Albinik the mariner to his mother. "It is nearly a year I have not seen her . . . She is surely still the pearl of the Isle of Sen? My wife Meroë charged me to remember her to Hena."

"You will see her to-morrow," answered Mamm' Margarid; and laying down her distaff she arose. It was the signal for the family to retire. Mamm' Margarid looked around and said:

"Let us retire, my children; it is late; to-morrow at break of day we must begin our war preparations"; and turning to the traveler:

"May the gods grant you a good rest and pleasant dreams!"

CHAPTER VIII.

FAREWELL!

Agreeable to his promise, Joel pushed off his boat early the next morning, accompanied by his son Albinik the mariner, and took the unknown traveler to the island of Kellor, seeing he did not dare to land at the sacred precincts of the Isle of Sen. The brenn's guest said a few words in a low voice to the ewagh who mounts perpetual guard in the island's house. He seemed to be struck with respect and answered that Talyessin, the oldest of the living druids, who then was at the Isle of Sen together with his wife Auria, expected a traveler since the previous evening.

Before leaving Joel, the stranger said to his host: "I hope neither you nor your family will forget your resolution of yesterday. This day a call to arms will resound from one end of Breton Gaul to the other."

"You may rest assured that I and the rest of my tribe will be the first to respond to the call."

"I believe you. The issue now is whether Gaul shall fall into slavery or shall rise again to the height of her one-time power and glory."

"But should I not, at this moment when I am to leave you, know the name of the brave man who sat at my hearth? The name of the wise man who speaks with so much soundness and loves his country so warmly?"

"Joel, my name shall be 'Soldier' so long as Gaul is not free; and if we ever meet again, I shall call myself 'Your Friend,' seeing that I am that."

Saying these words the unknown traveler stepped into the ewagh's boat that was to take him from Kellor to the Isle of

Sen. Before the boat, which was under charge of the ewagh, put off, Joel asked the latter whether he would be permitted to wait at the house for his daughter Hena, who was to come on that day to visit the family. The ewagh informed him that his daughter would not start for the shore until evening. Sorry at not being able to take Hena with him, the brenn re-entered his boat and returned alone with Albinik.

Towards noon, Julyan went to consult the druids of the forest of Karnak upon whether he should take the immediate and voluntary death which would be a pleasure to him, seeing he was to rejoin Armel, or seek death in battle against the Romans. The druids answered him that having sworn to Armel upon his brotherhood faith to die with him, he should be faithful to his promise, and that the ewaghs would bring the body of Armel with the usual ceremonies in order to place it upon the pyre where Julyan would find his place at moon-rise. Happy at being able so soon to join his friend, Julyan was about to leave Karnak, when he saw the stranger, who had been the guest of Joel and who now returned from the Isle of Sen, approaching through the forest in the company of Talyessin. The latter said a few words to the other druids, who forthwith surrounded the traveler with great eagerness and marks of respect. The younger ones of the druids received him as a brother, the elder ones as a son.

Recognizing Julyan, the traveler said to him:

"As you are to return to the brenn of the tribe, wait a little; I shall give you a letter for him."

Julyan yielded to the wish of the stranger, who withdrew accompanied by Talyessin and other druids. He returned shortly and handed to Julyan a little scroll of yellow tanned skin, saying:

"This is for Joel . . . This evening, Julyan, when the moon rises we shall see each other again . . . Hesus loves those who, like you, are brave and faithful in their friendship."

Upon arriving at the brenn's house, Julyan learned that the former was on the field gathering in the wheat. He went after him and delivered to Joel the writing sent by the stranger. It said:

"Friend Joel, in the name of Gaul now in danger, this is what the druids expect of you: Command all the members of your family who are at work on the fields to cry out to those of the tribe working not far from them: The mistletoe and the new year! *Let every man, woman and child, all without exception, meet this evening in the forest of Karnak at the rise of the moon.* Let those of the tribe who will have heard these words in turn repeat them aloud to those of the other tribes who may also be at work on the fields, so that the call being repeated from mouth to mouth, from one to another, from village to village, from town to town, from Vannes to Auray, notify all the tribes to convene this evening at the forest of Karnak."

Joel did as ordered by the stranger in the name of the druids of Karnak. The call was carried from mouth to mouth, from the nearest to the most distant tribes; all were notified to meet that evening in the forest of Karnak when the moon rose.

While some of the brenn's family were hurriedly gathering in the wheat harvest that still remained heaped on the fields, in order to deposit a portion of it in cellars that the laborers were digging on dry ground, the women, the girls and even the children, all working under the direction of Margarid, were as busily engaged disposing of salted meats into baskets, flour into bags, hydromel and wine into pouches; others were filling coffers with lint and balsam for wounds; others were adjusting broad and strong tent cloths over the chariots. In all wars considered dangerous, the tribes threatened by the enemy, instead of waiting for, usually went out to meet him. The houses were abandoned; the field oxen were hitched to the war-chariots, all of which contained the women, the children, the clothes and the provisions of the combatants. The horses, ridden by the full grown

men of the tribe, constituted the cavalry. The young men, being more agile, went on foot as an armed escort. The grain was hidden away; the cattle, let loose, pastured where they pleased and returned instinctively every evening to their usual stables. Generally, the wolves and bears devoured a part. The fields remained untended and scarcity followed. Often the combatants who went to war in defence of their country, encouraged by the presence of their wives and children, and having nothing to expect from the enemy but disgrace, slavery or death, drove back the invader beyond their frontiers, and returned home to repair the disasters of the fields.

Knowing that his daughter was due at the house, Joel returned home towards sun-down. He also expected to be able to take a hand in the preparations for the war.

Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sen, soon arrived. When her father, mother and other relatives saw her enter it seemed to them never before had she been so beautiful. Never before did her father feel so proud of his daughter. The long black tunic that she wore was held around her waist by a brass belt, from which, on one side, hung a little gold sickle, and on the other a crescent in the shape of the waning moon. Hena had dressed herself with special care in honor of the celebration of her birthday. A necklace and gold bracelets inlaid with garnets ornamented her arms and neck, whiter than the driven snow. When she took off her caped cloak it was noticed that she wore, as ever at religious ceremonies, a crown of green oak leaves on her blonde hair, plaited in braids over her chaste and mild forehead. The blue of the sea, when lying calmly under a clear sky, was not purer than the blue of Hena's eyes.

The brenn stretched out his arms to his daughter. She ran into them joyously and offered him her forehead, as she also did her mother. The children of the family loved Hena dearly and contested with each other the privilege of being the first to kiss her hands—sought with greed by all the little innocent

mouths. Even old Deber-Trud gamboled and barked with joy at the arrival of his young mistress.

Albinik the mariner was the first to whom Hena offered her forehead to kiss after her father and mother; she had not seen her brother for a long time. Next came the turn of Guilhern and Mikael and then the swarm of children, whom, stooping to them, Hena, sought to hold all together in one embrace. The young priestess then tenderly greeted Henory, her brother Guilhern's wife, and expressed her regret at not seeing Albinik's wife Meroë. Nor were the other relatives forgotten; all, down to Stumpy, otherwise everyone's butt, had a kind word from her.

The general exchange of greetings being over, and happy at finding herself among her own, in the house where she was born eighteen years before, Hena sat down at her mother's feet on the same stool that she used to occupy when a child. When she saw her child seated at her feet, Mamm' Margarid called the maid's attention to the disorder that reigned in the house due to the preparations for war, and she said sadly:

"We should have celebrated this day of your birth with joy and tranquility, dear child! Instead, you now find confusion and alarm in our house that soon will be deserted . . . War threatens."

"Mother is right," answered Hena sighing; "Great is the anger of Hesus."

"And what say you, dear child, you who are a saint," inquired Joel, "a saint of the Isle of Sen? What must we do to appease the wrath of the All-Powerful?"

"My father and mother honor me too much by calling me a saint," answered the young virgin. "Like the druids, myself and my female companions have meditated all night under the shadows of the sacred oak-trees at the hour of moon rise. We search for the simplest and divinest principles, and seek to spread them among our fellow-beings. We adore the All-Pow-

erful in His works, from the mighty oak that is sacred to Him, down to the humble moss that grows on the rocks of our isle; from the stars, whose eternal course we study, down to the insect that is born and dies in one day; from the sourceless sea, down to the streamlet of water that glides under the grass. We search for the cure of diseases that cause pain, and we glorify those among our fathers and mothers who have shed lustre upon Gaul. By the knowledge of the auguries and the study of the past, we seek to foresee the future to the end of enlightening those who are less clear-sighted than ourselves. Finally, like the druids, we teach childhood, we inspire the child with an ardent love of our common and beloved fatherland —so threatened to-day by the wrath of Hesus, a wrath that comes down upon them because they have forgotten that *they are all the children of the same God*, and that a brother must resent the wound inflicted upon his brother."

"The stranger who was our guest and whom this morning I took to the Isle of Sen," replied the brenn, "spoke to us as you do, dear daughter."

"My father and mother may listen as sacred words to the words of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys. Hesus and love for Gaul inspire him. He is brave among the bravest."

"He! Is he the Chief of the Hundred Valleys?" exclaimed Joel. "He refused to give me his name! Do you know it, daughter? Do you know which is his native province?"

"He was impatiently waited for yesterday evening at the Isle of Sen by the venerable Talyessin. As to his name, all that I am free to say to my father and mother is that the day on which our country should be subjugated will also be the day when the Chief of the Hundred Valleys will see the last drop of his blood flow from his veins. May the wrath of Hesus spare us that disastrous day!"

"Oh, my daughter, if Hesus is angry, how are we to appease him?"

"By obeying the law. He has said—*all men are the children*

of one God. By offering to him human sacrifices . . . May those that are to be offered to-night calm his wrath."

"The sacrifices of to-night?" asked the brenn; "which are they?"

"Do not my father and mother know that to-night, when the moon rises, there will be three human sacrifices at the stones of the forest of Karnak?"

"We know," answered Joel, "that all the tribes have been convened to appear this evening at the forest of Karnak. But who are the people that are to be sacrificed and will be pleasing to Hesus, dear daughter?"

"First of all Daoulas the murderer: he killed Houarne without a fight and in his sleep. The druids have sentenced him to die this evening. The blood of a cowardly murderer is an expiation agreeable to Hesus."

"And the second sacrifice?"

"Our relative Julyan wishes, out of friendship, to rejoin Armel, whom he loyally killed in a contest. This evening, glorified by the chant of the bards, he will go, agreeable to his vow, and join Armel in the unknown worlds. The blood of a brave man, voluntarily offered to Hesus, is agreeable to him."

"And the third sacrifice, dear child?" asked Mamm' Margarid; "Who is it?"

Hena did not answer. She dropped her blonde and charming head upon the knees of Margarid, remained a while in a revery, kissed her mother's hands and said to her with a sweet smile that brought back old rememberances:

"How often did not little Hena, when still a child, fall asleep of an evening on your knees, mother, while you spun at your distaff, and when all of you now present, except Albinik, were gathered at the hearth, narrating the virile virtues of our mothers and our fathers of old!"

"It is true, dear daughter," answered Margarid caressingly passing her hand over the blonde hair of her child; "it is true. And here among us we all loved you so much for your good heart

and your infantine grace, that when we saw you had fallen asleep on my knees, we all spoke in a low voice not to awake you."

Stumpy, who was among the crowd of relatives, put in:

"But who is that third human sacrifice, that is to appease Hesus and deliver us from war? Who, Hena, is the third to be sacrificed this evening?"

"I shall tell you, Stumpy, when I shall have had a little time to meditate upon the past," answered the young maid dreamily, without leaving her mother's knees; and passing her hand over her forehead as if to refreshen her memory, she looked around, pointed to the stone where stood the copper bowl with the seven twigs of mistletoe and proceeded saying:

"When I was twelve, do my father and mother remember how happy I was at having been selected by the female druids of the Isle of Sen to receive in a veil of linen, whitened in the dew of night, the mistletoe which the druids cut with a gold sickle at the moment when the moon shed its clearest light? Do my father and mother remember how, bringing home the mistletoe to sanctify our home, I was taken hither by the ewaghs in a chariot decked with flowers and greens while the bards sang the glory of Hesus? What tender embraces did not my whole family lavish upon me at my return! What a feast it was in our tribe!"

"Dear, dear daughter," said Margarid pressing Hena's head against her maternal breast, "if the female druids chose you to receive the sacred mistletoe in a linen veil, it was because your soul was as pure as the veil."

"It was because little Hena was the bravest of all her companions, she almost perished in the attempt to save Janed, the daughter of Wor, who, as she was gathering shells on the rocks along the shore of Glen'-Hek, fell into the water and was being carried away by the waves," said Mikael the armorer, tenderly contemplating his sister.

"It was because, beyond all others, little Hena was sweet,

patient and kind to the children; it was because, when only twelve, she instructed them like at matron at the cottage of the female druids of the Isle of Sen," said Guilhern in his turn.

The daughter of Joel blushed with modesty at the words of her mother and brothers; but Stumpy insisted:

"But who is that third human sacrifice that is to appease Hesus and deliver us from war? Who is it, Hena, who is it to be sacrificed this evening?"

"I shall tell you, Stumpy," answered the young maid rising; "I shall tell you after I have once more looked at the dear little chamber where I used to sleep when, having grown unto maidenhood, I came here from the Isle of Sen to attend our family feasts." And stepping towards the door of the chamber, she stopped for a moment at the threshold and said:

"What sweet nights have I spent there after retiring for the evening, regretful of leaving you! With what impatience did I not rise in the morning to meet you again!"

Taking two steps into the little chamber, while her family felt ever more astonished at hearing Hena, still so young, thus dwell upon the past, the young maid proceeded, taking up several articles that lay upon a little table:

"This is the sea-shell necklace that I entertained myself making in the evening sitting beside my mother . . . These are the little dried twigs that resemble trees, and that I gathered from our rocks . . . This is the net which I used when the tide was going out to catch little fishes with; how the sport used to amuse me! . . . There are the rolls of white skin on which, every time I came here, I recorded my joy at meeting my relatives and again seeing the house of my birth . . . I find everything in its place. I am glad of having gathered these young girl's treasures."

Stumpy, however, whom these mementoes did not seem to affect, again repeated in his sour and impatient voice:

"But who is to be the third human sacrifice that is to ap-

pease Hesus and deliver us from war? Who, Hena, is to be sacrificed this evening?"

"I shall let you know, Stumpy," answered Hena smiling. "I shall let you know after I shall have distributed my little treasures among you all,—you among them, Stumpy."

Saying this, the daughter of the brenn motioned to her relatives to enter the chamber, and in the midst of the silent astonishment of all she gave a souvenir to each. Each, even of the little ones who loved her so much and also Stumpy received something. In order to make her gifts reach around, she loosened the sea-shell necklace and split up the dry twigs, saying in her sweet voice to each:

"Keep this, I pray you, out of friendship for Hena, your relative and friend."

"Joel, his wife and his three children, to all of whom Hena had not yet given aught, looked at one another all the more astonished at what she did, seeing that towards the end tears appeared in her eyes although the young maid gave no other token of sadness. When all the others were supplied, Hena took from her neck the garnet necklace that she wore and said to Margarid while kissing her hand:

"Hena prays her mother to keep this out of love for her."

She then took the little rolls of white skin that had been prepared for writing on, handed them to Joel and kissing his hand said:

"Hena prays her father to keep this roll out of love for her; he will there find her most cherished thoughts."

Detaching thereupon from her arm her two garnet bracelets, Hena said to the wife of her brother Guilhern, the laborer:

"Hena prays her sister Henory to wear this bracelet out of love for her."

And giving the other bracelet to her brother the mariner she said:

"Your wife, Meroë, whom I love as much for her courage as

for her noble heart, is to keep this bracelet as a souvenir from me."

Hena then took from her copper belt the little gold sickle and crescent that hung from it. She tendered the former to Guilhern the laborer, the second to Albinik the mariner, and taking a ring from her finger she gave it to Mikael the armorer, saying to the three:

"I wish my brothers to preserve these keepsakes out of love for their sister Hena."

All those present remained astonished and holding in their hands the gifts that the virgin of the Isle of Sen had delivered to them. They all remained standing and so speechless with astonishment that none could utter a word, but looked uneasily at one another as if threatened by some unknown disaster. Hena finally turned to Stumpy:

"Stumpy," said she, "I shall now let you know who is to be the third sacrifice of this evening"; and taking the hands of Joel and Margarid she gently led them back into the large hall, whither all the others followed. Arrived there, Hena addressed her parents and assembled relatives:

"My father and mother know that the blood of a cowardly murderer is an expiatory offering to Hesus, and that it might appease him—"

"Yes—you told us so, dear daughter."

"They also know that the blood of a brave man who dies in pledge of friendship is a valorous offering to Hesus, and that it might appease him."

"Yes—you told us so, dear daughter."

"Finally, my father and mother know that the most acceptable of all offerings to Hesus and most likely to appease him is the innocent blood of a virgin, happy and proud at the thought of offering her blood to Hesus, and of doing so voluntarily—voluntarily—in the hope that that all-powerful god may deliver our beloved fatherland, this dear and sacred fatherland of our

fathers, from foreign oppression! . . . Thus the innocent blood of a virgin will flow this evening to appease the wrath of Hesus.

"And her name?" asked Stumpy, "the name of that virgin who is to deliver us from war!"

Hena looked towards her father and mother with tenderness and serenity and said:

"The virgin who is to die is one of the nine female druids of the Isle of Sen. Her name is Hena. She is the daughter of Margarid and Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak!"

Deep silence fell upon the family of Joel. None, not one present, expected to see Hena travel so soon yonder. None, not one present, neither her father, nor her mother, nor her brothers, nor any of her other relatives, was perpared for the farewells of the sudden journey.

The children joined their little hands and said weeping:

"What! . . . Leave us so soon? . . . Our Hena? . . . Why do you journey away?"

The father and mother looked at each other and sighed.

Margarid said to Hena: "Joel and Margarid believed that they would have to wait for their dear daughter in those unknown worlds, where we continue to live and where we meet again those whom we have loved here . . . But it is to be otherwise. It is Hena who will precede us."

"And perhaps," said the brenn, "our sweet and dear daughter will not long have to wait for us—

"May her blood, innocent and pure as a lamb's, appease the wrath of Hesus!" added Margarid; "May we soon be able to follow our dear daughter and inform her that Gaul is delivered from the stranger."

"And the remembrance of the valiant sacrifice of our daughter shall be kept alive in our race," said the father; "so long as the descendants of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, shall live they will be proud to number among their ancestors Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sen."

The young maid made no answer. Her eyes wandered with sweet avidity from one relative to the other as, at the moment of undertaking a journey, the departing one takes a last look at the beloved beings from whom he is to be separated for a while.

Pointing through the open door at the moon that, now at her fullest, was seen across the evening mist rising large-orbed and ruddy like a burning disk, Stumpy cried:

"Hena! . . . Hena! The moon is rising above the horizon . . . "

"You are right, Stumpy; this is the hour," she said unwillingly taking her eyes from the faces of her beloved family. An instant later she added:

"Let my father and mother and all the members of my family accompany me to the sacred stones of the forest of Karnak . . . The hour of the sacrifice has come."

Walking between Joel and Margarid, and followed by all the members of the tribe, Hena walked serenely to the forest of Karnak.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FOREST OF KARNAK.

The call for assembling that was issued to the tribes at noon, had run from mouth to mouth, from village to village, from town to town. It was heard all over Breton Gaul. Towards evening the tribes proceeded en masse—men, women and children—to the forest of Karnak, the same as Joel and his family.

The moon, at her fullest on that night, shone radiant amid the stars in the firmament. After having marched through the dark and the lighted spots of the forest, the assembling multitude finally arrived at the shores of the sea. The sacred stones of Karnak rose there in nine long avenues. They are sacred stones! They are the gigantic pillars of a temple that has the sky for its vault.

In the measure that the tribes drew nearer to the place, their solemnity deepened.

At the extremity of the avenue, the three stones of the sacrificial altar were ranged in a semi-circle, close to the shore. Behind the mass of people rose the deep and brooding forest, before them extended the boundless sea, above them spread the starry firmament.

The tribes did not step beyond the last avenue of Karnak. They left a wide space between themselves and the altar. The large crowd remained silent.

At the feet of the sacrificial stones rose three pyres.

The center one, the largest of the three, was ornamented with long white veils striped with purple; it was also ornamented with ash, oak and birch-tree branches, arranged in mystical order.

The pyre to the right was somewhat less high, but was also ornamented with green branches besides sheafs of wheat. On it lay the body of Armel, who had been killed in loyal combat. It was almost hidden under green and fruit-bearing boughs.

The left pyre was surmounted with a hollow bunch of twisted osiers bearing the resemblance of a human body of gigantic stature.

The sound of cymbals and harps was presently heard from the distance.

The male and female druids, together with the virgins of the Isle of Sen were approaching the sacrificial place.

At the head of the procession marched the bards, dressed in long white tunics that were held around their waists by brass belts; their temples were wreathed in oak leaves; they sang while playing upon their harps: "God, Gaul and her heroes."

They were followed by the ewaghs charged with the sacrifices, and carrying torches and axes; they led in their midst and in chains Daoulas, the murderer who was to be executed.

Behind these marched the druids themselves, clad in their purple-striped white robes, and their temples also wreathed in oak leaves. In their midst was Julyan, happy and proud; Julyan who was glad to leave this world in order to rejoin his friend Armel, and journey in his company over the unknown worlds.

Finally came the married female druids, clad in white tunics with gold belts, and the nine virgins of the Isle of Sen, clad in their black tunics, their belts of brass, their arms bare, their green chaplets and their gold harps. Hena walked at the head of the latter. Her eyes looked for her father, her mother and her relatives—Joel, Margarid and their family had been placed in the front rank of the crowd—they soon recognized their daughter; their hearts went out to her.

The druids ranked themselves beside the sacrificial stones. The bards ceased chanting. One of the ewaghs than said to the

crowd, that all who wished to be remembered to people whom they had loved and who were no longer here, could deposit their letters and offering on the pyres.

A large number of relatives and friends of those who had long been traveling yonder, thereupon piously approached the pyres, and deposited letters, flowers and other souvenirs that were to re-appear in the other worlds, the same as the souls of the bodies that were about to dissolve in brilliant flames, were to re-appear in a new body.

Nobody, however, not one single person, deposited aught on the pyre of the murderer. As proud and joyful as Julyan was, Daoulas was crestfallen and frightened. Julyan had everything to hope for from the continuance of a life that had been uniformly pure and just. The murderer had everything to fear from the continuance of a life that was stained with crime. After all the offerings for the departed ones were deposited on the pyres, a profound silence followed.

The ewaghs led Daoulas in chains to the osier effigy. Despite the pitiful cries of the condemned man, he was pinioned and placed at the foot of the pyre, and the ewaghs remained near him, axes in hand.

Talyessin, the oldest of all the druids, an old man with long white beard, made a sign to one of the bards, who thereupon struck his three-stringed harp and intonated the following chant, after pointing to the murderer:

"This man is of the tribe of Morlech. He killed Houarne of the same tribe. Did he kill him, like a brave man face to face with equal weapons? No, Daoulas killed Houarne like a coward. At the noon hour, Houarne was asleep under a tree. Daoulas approached him on tiptoe, axe in hand and killed his victim with one blow. Little Erick of the same tribe, who happened to be in a near-by tree picking fruit, saw the murder and him who committed it. On the evening of the same day the ewaghs seized Daoulas in his tribe. Brought before the druids

of Karnak and confronted by Erick, he confessed his crime. Whereupon the oldest of the druids said:

" 'In the name of Hesus, *He who is because he is,* in the name of Teutates, who presides over journeys in this world and in the others, hear: The expiatory blood of the murderer is agreeable to Hesus . . . You are about to be born again in other worlds. Your new life will be terrible, because you were cruel and cowardly . . . You will die to be re-born in still greater wretchedness forever and ever through all eternity . . . Become, on the contrary, from the moment that you are re-born, brave and good, despite the sufferings that you will endure and you will then die happy, to be re-born yonder, thus forever and ever, through all eternity !!!' "

The bard then addressed himself to the murderer, who emitted fearful cries of terror.

Thus spoke the venerable druid: "Daoulas, you are about to die . . . and to meet your victim . . . *He is waiting for you, he is waiting for you!*"

When the bard pronounced these words, a shudder went through the assembled crowd. The fearful thought of meeting in the next world alive him who was killed in this made them all tremble.

The bard proceeded, turning towards the pyre:

"Daoulas, you are about to die! It is a glorious thing to see the face of a brave and just person at the moment when he or she voluntarily quits this world for some sacred cause. They love, at the moment of their departure to see the tender looks of farewell of their parents and friends. Cowards like yourself, Daoulas, are unworthy of taking a last look at the just. Hence, Daoulas, you will die and burn hidden in that envelop of osier, the effigy of a man, as you have become since the commission of the murder."

And the bard cried:

"In the name of Hesus! In the name of Teutates! Glory, glory to the brave! Shame, shame on the coward!"

All the bards struck upon their harps and their cymbals, and cried in chorus:

"Glory, glory to the brave! Shame, shame on the coward!"

An ewagh then took up a sacred knife, cut off the murderer's life and cast his body inside of the huge osier effigy of a man. The pyre was set on fire. The harps and cymbals struck up in chorus, and all the tribes repeated aloud the last words of the bard:

"Shame on the coward!"

Soon the murderer's pyre was a raging mass of flame, within which was seen for a moment the effigy of a man like a giant on fire. The flames lighted the tops of the oaks of the forest, the colossal stones of Karnak, and even the vast expanse of the sea, while the moon inundated the space with its divine light. A few minutes later there was nothing left but a heap of ashes where the pyre of Daoulas had stood.

Julyan was then seen ascending with radiant mien the pyre where lay the body of Armel, his friend—his pledged brother. Julyan had on his holiday clothes: a blouse of fine material striped white and blue, held around his waist by an embroidered leather belt, from which hung his knife. His caped cloak of brown wool was held by a brooch over his left shoulder. An oak crown decked his manly head. He held in his hand a nosegay of vervain. He looked serene and bold. Hardly had he ascended the pyre, when again the harps and cymbals struck up, and the bard chanted:

"Who is this? He is a brave man! It is Julyan the laborer; Julyan of the family of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak! He fears the gods, and all love him. He is good, he is industrious, he is brave. He killed Armel not in hate but in a contest, in loyal combat, buckler on arm, sword in hand, like a true Breton Gaul, who loves to display his bravery and does not fear death. Armel having departed, Julyan, who had pledged brotherhood to him, wishes to depart also and join his friend. Glory to Julyan, faithful to the teachings of the druids. He knows

that the creatures of the All-Powerful never die, and his pure and noble blood Julyan now offers up to Hesus. Glory, hope and happiness to Julyan! He has been good, just and brave. He will be re-born still happier, still juster, still braver, and ever onward, from world to world, Julyan will be re-born, his soul being ever re-incarnated in a new body the same as the body that here puts on new clothes."

"Oh, Gauls! Ye proud souls, to whom death does not exist! Come, come! Remove your eyes from this earth; rise to the sublimity of heaven. See, see at your feet the abyss of space, dotted by these myriads of mortals as are all of us, and whom Teutates guides incessantly from the world that they have lived in towards the world that they are next to inhabit. Oh, what unknown worlds and marvelous we shall journey through, with our friends and our relatives that have preceded us, and with those whom we shall precede!"

"No, we are not mortals! Our infinite lives are numbered by myriads and myriads of centuries, just as are numbered by myriads of myriads the stars in the firmament—mysterious worlds, ever different, ever new, that we are successively to inhabit."

"Let those fear death who, faithful to the false gods of the Greeks, the Romans and the Jews, believe that man lives only once, and that after that, stripped of his body, the happy or unhappy soul remains eternally in the same hell or the same paradise! Aye! They are bound to fear death who believe that when man quits this life he finds *immobility in eternity.*"

"We Gauls have the right knowledge of God. We hold the secret of death. *Man is immortal both in body and soul.* Our destiny from world to world is to see and learn, to the end that at each of these journeys, if we have led wicked and impure lives, we may purify ourselves and become better—still better if we have been just and good; and that thus, from new birth to new birth man rises incessantly towards perfection as endless as his life!"

"Happy, therefore, are the brave who voluntarily leave this world for other regions where they will ever see new and marvelous sights in the company of those whom they have loved! Happy, therefore, happy the brave Julyan! He is about to meet again with his friend, and with him see and know *what none of us has yet seen or known, and what all of us shall see and know!* Happy Julyan! Glory, glory to Julyan!"

And all the bards and all the druids, the female druids and the virgins of the Isle of Sen repeated in chorus to the sound of the harps and the cymbals:

"Happy, Happy Julyan! Glory to Julyan!"

And all the tribes, feeling the thrill of curiosity of death and certain that they all would eventually become acquainted with the marvels of the other worlds, repeated with their thousands of voices:

"Happy Julyan! Happy Julyan!"

Standing erect upon his pyre, his face radiant, and at his feet the body of Armel, Julyan raised his inspired eyes towards the brilliant moon, opened his blouse, drew his long knife, held up the nosegay of vervain to heaven with his left hand, and with his right firmly plunged his knife into his breast, uttering as he did so in a strong voice:

"Happy—happy am I. I am to join Armel!"

The pyre was immediately lighted. Julyan, raised for a last time his nosegay of vervain to heaven, and then vanished in the midst of the blinding flames, while the chants of the bards and the clang of harp and cymbals resounded far and wide.

In their impatience to see and know the mysteries of the other world, a large number of men and women of the tribes rushed towards Julyan's pyre for the purpose of departing with him and of offering to Hesus an immense hecatomb with their bodies. But Talyessin, the eldest of the druids, ordered the ewaghs to restrain and hold these faithful people back. He cried out to them:

"Enough blood has flown without that which is still to flow.

But the hour has come when the blood of Gaul should flow only for freedom. The blood that is shed for liberty is also an agreeable offering to the All-Powerful."

It was not without great effort that the ewaghs prevented the threatened rush of voluntary human sacrifices. The pyre of Julyan and Armel burned until the flames had nothing more to feed upon.

Again profound silence fell upon the crowd. Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sen, had ascended the third pyre.

Joel and Margarid, their three sons, Guilhern, Albinik and Mikael, Guilhern's wife and little children all of whom so dearly loved Hena, all her relatives and all the members of her tribe held one another in a close embrace, and said to one another:

"There is Hena . . . There is our Hena!"

As the virgin of the Isle of Sen stood upon the pyre that was ornamented with white veils, greens and flowers, the crowds of the tribes cried in one voice: "How beautiful she is! . . . How holy!"

Joel writes it now down in all sincerity. His daughter Hena was indeed very beautiful as she stood erect on the pyre, lighted by the mellow light of the moon and resplendent in her black tunic, her blonde hair and her green chaplet, while her arms, whiter than ivory, embraced her gold harp!

The bards ordered silence.

The virgin of the Isle of Sen sang in a voice as pure as her own soul:

"The daughter of Joel and Margarid comes to offer gladly her life as a sacrifice to Hesus!

"Oh, All-Powerful! From the stranger deliver the soil of our father!

"Gauls of Britanny, you have the lance and the sword!

"The daughter of Joel and Margarid has but her blood. She offers it voluntarily to Hesus!

"Oh, Almighty God! Render invincible the Gallic lance and

sword! Oh, Hesus, take my blood, it is yours . . . save our sacred fatherland!"

The eldest of the female druids stood all this while on the pyre behind Hena with the sacred knife in her hand. When Hena's chant was ended, the knife glistened in the air and struck the virgin of the Isle of Sen.

Her mother and her brothers, all the members of her tribe and her father Joel saw Hena fall upon her knees, cross her arms, turn her celestial face towards the moon, and cry with a still sonorous voice:

"Hesus . . . Hesus . . . by the blood that flows . . . Mercy for Gaul!"

"Gauls, by this blood that flows, victory to our arms!"

Thus the sacrifice of Hena was consummated amidst the religious admiration of the tribes. All repeated the last words of the brave virgin:

"Hesus, mercy for Gaul! . . . Gauls, victory to our arms!"

Several young men, being fired with enthusiasm by the heroic example and beauty of Hena sought to kill themselves upon her pyre in order to be re-born with her. The ewaghs held them back. The flames soon enveloped the pyre and Hena vanished in their dazzling splendor. A few minutes later there was nothing left of the virgin and her pyre but a heap of ashes. A high wind sat in from the sea and dispersed the atoms. The virgin of the Isle of Sen, brilliant and pure as the flame that consumed her, had vanished into space to be re-born and to await beyond for the arrival of those whom she had loved.

The cymbals and harps resounded anew, and the chief of the bards struck up the chant:

"To arms, ye Gauls, to arms!

"The innocent blood of a virgin flowed for your sakes, and shall not yours flow for the fatherland! To arms! The Romans are here. Strike, Gauls, strike at their heads! Strike hard! See the enemy's blood flow like a stream! It rises up to your knees! Courage! Strike hard! Gauls, strike the Romans! Still harder!

Harder still! You see the enemy's blood extend like a lake! It rises up to your chests! Courage! Strike still harder, Gauls! Strike the Romans! Strike harder still! You will rest to-morrow . . . To-morrow Gaul will be free! Let, to-day, from the Loire to the ocean, but one cry resound—'To arms!' "

As if carried away by the breath of war, all the tribes dispersed, running to their arms. The moon had gone down; dark night set in. But from all parts of the woods, from the bottoms of the valleys, from the tops of the hills where the signal fires were burning, a thousand voices echoed and re-echoed the chant of the bards:

"To arms! Strike, Gauls! Strike hard at the Romans! To arms!"

* * *

The above truthful account of all that happened at our poor home on the birthday of my glorious Hena, a day that also saw her heroic sacrifice—that account has been written by me, Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, at the last moon of October of the first year that Julius Caesar came to invade Gaul. I wrote it upon the rolls of white skin that my glorious daughter Hena gave me as a keepsake, and my eldest son, Guilhern has attached to them the keepsake he received from her—the mystic gold sickle of the virgin druid priestess. Let the two ever remain together.

After me, my eldest son Guilhern shall carefully preserve both the writing and the emblem, and after Guilhern, the sons of his sons are charged to transmit them from generation to generation, to the end that our family may for all time preserve green the memory of Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sen.

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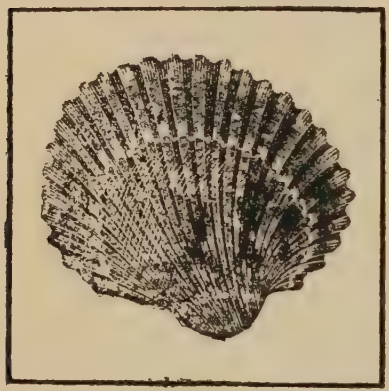

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